ANNALS

OF THE

EARLY CALIPHATE

FROM ORIGINAL SOURCES

BY

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WITH A MAP

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PREFACE.

THIS work is a continuation of the 'LIFE OF MAHOMET.' Taking up the thread from his death and burial, it tells the story of the spread of the Religion which he founded, and seeks to trace the special causes—national, tribal, and spiritual—which moulded the Faith, created its expansive power, and guided its onward progress. The object is, in short, to float the bark of ISLAM over the rapids and devious currents of its early course until, becoming more or less subject to ordinary human influences, it emerges on the great stream of time. I have, therefore, given the first four CALIPHATES in full detail; I have endeavoured to explain the ascendency of the OMEYYAD house; and then, briefly showing how the ABBASSIDE dynasty rose upon its ruins, my purpose being ended, I close the book. Thereafter the history of ISLAM spreads itself out into the history of the world.

The materials for the work will be understood by the reader as he goes along. They are purely Arabian. Christian authorities there are absolutely none to speak of. We depend entirely upon Mahometan tradition; and that in a form very different from what we have been accustomed to in the Life of Mahomet.

The substance of tradition becomes, after the PROPHET'S death, more of a general outline; altogether wanting (excepting some of the special episodes) in that profuse detail with which the life of Mahomet is overlaid.

Such as it is, however, the story can be worked out broadly with consistency, and the progress of the Moslem arms and faith, as a whole, depicted truthfully. The great treasury of tradition on which the historian must draw is the Annals of TABARI, happily styled by Gibbon the Livy of the Arabians, who flourished in the third century of the Hegira. Unfortunately his work has hitherto been accessible to me, in its original form, only as far as the great battle of Câdesîya, in the fourteenth year of the Hegira—that is, three years after the Prophet's death.[1] The materials, however, so laboriously collected by Tabari, have been copiously used by later writers, especially by IBN AL ATHÎR (d. A.H. 630), whose History has been mainly followed in these Annals, from the point at which Tabari, as at present available, ends. I have not neglected other sources, such as BELÂDZORI (3rd cent.) and IBN KHALDÛN, a later writer. In all essential points I believe that the picture which I have endeavoured to draw of the rise and spread of the Faith may be accepted with confidence.

I have received much help from the invaluable

[1] Manuscripts of the whole work have, however, been procured, and are now being published on the Continent, but not in time to be available for this work. They will serve hereafter to correct, perhaps, some of the doubtful points of the history on which, from the scantiness of the material, I may have gone astray.

work of Dr. Weil,[1] whose literary acumen and candour are equalled only by his marvellous industry and research. I have also freely made use of M. Caussin de Perceval's admirable *Essai sur l'Histoire des Arabes*; but it unfortunately ends with the Caliphate of Omar. On the general condition of early Mussulman society I have found the scholarly volumes of H. von Kremer most valuable.[2]

I have followed the same system of rendering names as in the 'Life of Mahomet' (adopted mainly from Caussin de Perceval), excepting in such received forms as Bussorah, Mecca, &c.; namely:

ث is represented by *th*.	ض is represented by *dh*.
ج „ „ „ *j*.	ظ „ „ „ *tz*.
خ „ „ „ *kh*.	ع by a sharp accent, as *á*, *ó*.
ذ „ „ „ *dz*.	غ is represented by *gh*.
ز „ „ „ *z*.	ق „ „ „ *c* or *ck*.
	ك „ „ „ *k*.

In quoting from the 'Life of Mahomet,' I refer to the Second Edition in one volume, unless the First Edition in four volumes is specified.

I am indebted for the map which illustrates the campaigns, to Mr. Trelawney Saunders, whose close acquaintance with the geography of Syria and Chaldæa peculiarly qualifies him to identify many of the sites, routes, &c.

The reader must remember that the Mussulman

[1] *Geschichte der Chalifen*, 3 vols., Mannheim, 1846–1851.
[2] *Culturgeschichte des Orients unter den Chalifen*, Wien, 1875.

year is a purely lunar one, being eleven days shorter than ours, so that passing through the solar cycle it gains a year in about every thirty-three years.

At the death of Mahomet, in the eleventh year of the Hegira, Moharram (the first month of the Arabian year) began on the 29th of March, so that the corresponding months of the European calendar fell at that period as in the following table:

Arabian Months.	Corresponding Months.
Moharram, A.H. XI. . . .	April, A.D. 632.
Safar	May ,,
Rabî I.	June ,,
Rabî II.	July ,,
Jumâd I.	August ,,
Jumâd II.	September ,,
Rajab	October ,,
Shábân	November ,,
Ramadhân (Ramzân) . . .	December ,,
Shawwâl	January, A.D. 633.
Dzul Cáda	February ,,
Dzul Hijj	March ,,

To keep the notation distinct, I have ordinarily marked the years of the Hegira by Roman numerals.

W. M.

November 1882.

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Errata

Page 72, line 14, *for* Hâtim, son of Adî, *read* Adî, son of Hâtim.
Page 241, line 15, *for* Khâlid *read* Amru.

ANNALS
OF
THE EARLY CALIPHATE.

CHAPTER I.

ELECTION OF ABU BEKR.

A.H. XI. A.D. 632.

Death of Mahomet, 13 Rabi I. A.H. XI., June 8, A.D. 632.

AT eventide of a summer day in the eleventh year of the Hegira, three chief 'Companions' of Mahomet might be seen issuing in haste from the Great Mosque at Medîna, where, close by in the chamber of Ayesha, his favourite wife, the Prophet of Arabia lay dead.[1] They were Abu Bekr, Omar, and Abu Obeida. I will first describe each briefly, and then explain the object of their errand.

Abu Bekr.

ABU BEKR, now threescore years of age, was somewhat short in stature, of a spare frame, rounded back, and stooping gait. His face was thin, complexion smooth and fair, nose aquiline and sharp, with other features delicate; the forehead high; the eyes deep-seated and far apart; the veins well marked. His scanty hair and beard, now for many years white, was dyed red. The countenance was still in old age

[1] The date ordinarily given as that of the Prophet's death is the 12th Rabi I. See note p. 280, *Life of Mahomet*, vol. iv.

For the term 'Companion,' technically used to signify all who had a personal acquaintance with the Prophet, see *ibid.* p. 564.

The era of the Hegira was established by Omar, five or six years after the Prophet's death. The first Moharram of the first year of the Hegira corresponds with 19th April, A.D. 622. The real *hegira*, or flight of Mahomet from Mecca, took place two months later (June 20). See *ibid.* p. 145, and *C. de Perceval*, vol. iii. p. 17.

handsome; and the expression mild, but wise and resolute. To him faith in the Prophet had become a second nature, and, now that his Master was gone, the disciple lived but to fulfil his will. It was this that nerved a disposition naturally soft and yielding, and made Abu Bekr, THE TRUE,[1] of all the followers of Mahomet, the firmest and most resolute.

OMAR. OMAR, fifteen years younger, differed both in frame and temperament. Broad-shouldered and tall, he towered above the crowd. Though somewhat dark in complexion, the face was fresh and ruddy. He was now bald; and his beard was dyed like his friend's. His stride was long, and his presence commanding. Naturally hasty and passionate, he would twist his moustache when angry and draw it downwards to his mouth. But time had mellowed temper; and, beneath an imperious manner, he was bland and courteous. Their attachment to Mahomet had, on these two friends, an effect exactly opposite. That which braced the soft nature of Abu Bekr served to abate the vehemence of Omar. Both stood in a like relation to the Prophet, each having given a daughter to him in marriage; Haphsa, Omar's daughter, was one of Mahomet's favourite wives; but Ayesha, the child of Abu Bekr, was queen in his affections to the end.

ABU OBEIDA. On these two men at this moment hung the future of Islam. The third, who now accompanied them, ABU OBEIDA, was between them in age. He was thin, tall, and sinewy; bald, and with little beard. Mild, unassuming, and unwarlike, he was yet destined to take a leading part in the conquest of Syria.

Abu Bekr and Omar in the Great Mosque. It was the afternoon of the day on which, but an hour or two before, Mahomet had breathed his last. The event had come unexpectedly at the end. Abu Bekr, thinking the Prophet better, had shortly before retired to his house in the suburbs of the city. Called back in haste, he entered Ayesha's chamber, and kissed the face of his departed friend, saying:—

[1] *Al Siddick*; ibid. vol. ii. 102, 220. He was also called 'the Sighing one,' from his compassionate nature.

'Sweet wert thou in life; and sweet thou art in death.' The mosque was filled with a crowd excited by the voice of Omar, who wildly proclaimed that the Prophet was not dead, but in a trance; and that, like Moses, he would surely return to them again. Abu Bekr, issuing from the chamber (which opened directly from the court of the mosque), put his friend aside with these memorable words:—*Whoso worshippeth Mahomet, let him know that Mahomet is dead indeed; but whoso worshippeth God, let him know that God liveth and dieth not.* He added passages from the Corân, in which the Prophet had said that he would die; and Omar, hearing them as if he had never heard them before, was speechless. The multitude quieted down before the solemn words of Abu Bekr. But just then a messenger hurried up with the report that the citizens of Medîna—the ANSÂR, had assembled to choose for themselves a chief. The moment was critical. The unity of the faith was at stake. A divided power would fall to pieces, and all might be lost. The mantle of the Prophet must fall upon one successor, and on one alone. The sovereignty of Islam demanded an undivided Caliphate; and Arabia would acknowledge no master but from amongst the Coreish. The die must be cast, and at once.

Men of Medîna would elect a chief of their own.

Such, no doubt, were the thoughts which occurred to Omar and Abu Bekr on receiving intelligence of the elective conclave; and so, alarmed at the danger, they hastened to the spot, accompanied by Abu Obeida, if haply they might nip it in the bud. On the way they met two friendly citizens coming from the assembly, who warned them of the risk they ran; but, notwithstanding, they hurried on. The men of Medîna meanwhile, gathered in one of their rude halls, were bent upon an independent course. 'We have sheltered this nest of strangers,' they cried. 'It is by our good swords they have been able to plant the Faith. The Chief of Medîna shall be from amongst ourselves.' And they had already fixed their choice on Sâd ibn Obâda, leader

Stormy scene in the hall of the citizens.

of the Beni Khazraj, one of 'the Twelve' at 'the Pledge of Acaba,' who, sick of a fever, lay covered up at the further end of the hall. At this moment the three Companions entered but just in time, for had the Citizens elected Sâd and pledged their troth to him, Medîna might have been irretrievably compromised. Omar, with his native vehemence, was about to speak, when Abu Bekr bade him to be silent, and anticipated him, as Omar used in after days to say, with the same arguments he himself had thought of, and even better. 'Every word,' said Abu Bekr, calmly and firmly, 'which the Citizens had uttered in their own praise was true, but in noble birth and influence the Coreish were paramount, and to none but them would Arabia yield obedience.' 'Then,' cried the men of Medîna, 'let there be one chief from amongst you and one from amongst us.' 'Away with you!' exclaimed Omar; 'two cannot stand together'; and even Sâd from beneath his covering muttered that to divide the power would weaken it. High words ensued. Hobâb, on the side of Sâd, cried out, 'Hear him not! Attend to me, for I am the *well-rubbed Palm-stem*.[1] If they refuse, expel them from the city. I am the Roaring Lion of the desert, and will devour them up.' 'The Lord destroy thee!' cried Omar; and Hobâb returned the words. The altercation gaining in heat and bitterness, Abu Bekr saw that it must be stopped at any risk; so stepping forward he said: 'Ye see these two'—and he pointed to Omar and Abu Obeida—'Choose ye now whichever of them ye will, and salute him as your Chief.' 'Nay,' cried both at once, 'Thou hast already, at the Prophet's bidding, led the prayers; thou art our Chief. Stretch forth thine hand.' He did so, and they struck their hand on his in token of allegiance.[2] Others began to follow their ex-

[1] Meaning a palm-trunk left for the beasts to come and rub themselves upon; a metaphor for a person much resorted to for counsel. Hobâb was the chief whom Mahomet employed to reconnoitre the enemy at Bedr.

[2] The Arabian mode of swearing fealty. The chief held out his hand, and the people one by one struck their hand flat upon it as they passed.

ample. 'Wilt thou cut thine own kinsman's throat?' cried Hobâb to a Khazrajite about to take the pledge. 'Not so,' he answered; 'I only yield the right to whom the right is due.' Whilst they yet hesitated, the Beni Aus, jealous of the rival tribe and of Sád its nominee, spake among themselves: 'If this man be chosen, the rule will be for ever with the Beni Khazraj. Let us salute Abu Bekr as our Chief.'[1] The example once set, group after group advanced to place their hand on that of Abu Bekr, till none was left but Sád, who still lay covered in the corner. Acknowledged thus by the men of Medîna, there could be no doubt of Abu Bekr's acceptance by the Coreish and all the Refugees.[2] He was one of themselves, and the Prophet, by appointing him to take his place, when laid aside, at the daily prayers, had in a manner indicated him as his vicegerent. And so homage was done on all sides to Abu Bekr. He was saluted as the 'CALIPH,' or '*Successor* of the Prophet.'

Abu Bekr elected Caliph.

The night was occupied in preparing the dead for sepulture. The body was washed and laid out, and the grave dug in Ayesha's apartment, where Mahomet had breathed his last. On the morrow the citizens, men, women, and children, thronged the chamber to look once more upon their Prophet's face. And then the body was reverently committed to the dust.

Burial of the Prophet.

The funeral being over, and the court of the Great Mosque still crowded with the mourners, Abu Bekr ascended the pulpit, and, sitting down, was saluted as Caliph by acclamation. Then he arose, and said: 'O people! Now I am Chief over you, albeit not the best amongst you. If I do well, support me; if ill, then set me right. Follow the true, wherein is faithfulness; eschew the false, wherein is

Abu Bekr's inaugural address.

[1] It will be remembered that the native population of Medîna was divided into the *Aus* and *Khazraj*, and Sád belonged to the latter. Enmity and fighting had long prevailed between them before Mahomet's arrival (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 119).

[2] The followers of Mahomet were divided into the *Muhâjerîn*, or Refugees from Mecca and elsewhere; and the *Ansâr* or Helpers, the citizens of Medina (*Ibid.* p. 189).

treachery. The weaker amongst you shall be as the stronger with me, until that I shall have redressed his wrong; and the stronger shall be as the weaker, until, if the Lord will, I shall have taken from him that which he hath wrested. Leave not off to fight in the ways of the Lord; whosoever leaveth off, him verily shall the Lord abase. Obey me wherein I obey the Lord and his Prophet; when I disobey, then obey me not. Now, arise to prayer, and the Lord be with you!' The assembly stood up for prayer, and Abu Bekr, for the first time as Caliph, filled the place of Mahomet.

Sád declines to swear fealty; and also (probably) Aly for a time.

Besides Sád, there were few, if any, who refused to do homage to Abu Bekr. According to most authorities, Aly declined to do so until the death of Fâtima his wife, six months afterwards. Zobeir and Talha are also mentioned, but doubtfully.[1] Sád persisted in his refusal; he even threatened to empty his quiver against the usurpers, and then fight against them with his retainers. 'Let him alone,' was the advice of those around the Caliph; 'he is but a

[1] The tradition regarding Zobeir and Talha, perhaps arose from their attempt at the Caliphate, and refusal to acknowledge Aly, five and twenty years afterwards. As to Aly himself, the traditions vary. By some he is said to have been among the first to swear fealty to Abu Bekr. But the more general tradition is that he did not do so till Fâtima, who had a grudge against Abu Bekr for her father's patrimony, died (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 516). There are other tales, but they all bear the stamp of Abbasside fabrication; such as of Omar threatening to burn Aly's house over his head; Zobeir rushing out with a sword, &c. We are even told that Abu Sofiân taunted Aly and Abbâs with allowing an insignificant branch of the Coreish to seize the Caliphate from them; likened them to a hungry donkey tethered up, or to a tent-peg made only to be beaten; and offered to help them with horse and foot, but that Aly declined his offer. These stories are childish and apocryphal. There is absolutely nothing in the antecedents of Aly, or his subsequent history, to render it in the least probable that during the first two Caliphates, he advanced any claim whatever, or indeed was in a position to do so. It was not till the reign of Othmân that any idea arose of a superior right in virtue of his having been the cousin of Mahomet and husband of Fâtima.

It is said that as the people crowded to the hall, where Sád lay sick, to salute Abu Bekr, one cried out: 'Have a care lest ye trample upon Sád, and kill him under foot.' 'The Lord kill him, as he deserveth!' was the response of the heated Omar. 'Softly, Omar!' interposed Abu Bekr, 'blandness and courtesy are better than curses and sharp words.' Indeed, throughout this chapter Abu Bekr appears to great advantage.

single man, and his secession will not signify; but if force be used against him, then his tribe will fight.' The advice approved itself to Abu Bekr's forbearing spirit. Sâd kept aloof, and never appeared at court or in the mosque. When Omar succeeded to the Caliphate, he presented himself with these words, 'I love thee not, O Omar!' and, disappearing, eventually died in Syria.

The succession, how far provided for by Mahomet; and the precedent now established.

With Mahomet ceased the theocratic power which, as a prophet, he had exercised; but the kingly functions, as ruler over all Islam, descended to his successor. According to Arabian notions, such a ruler was, like the Chieftain of a tribe, the head and representative of the people, and his nomination was incomplete till confirmed by their homage. Omar, we are told, in after days declared that the irregular election of Abu Bekr (referring apparently to the scene enacted in the hall) should not be drawn into a precedent. It was, he said, an event the happiest in its consequences for Islam, but justified only by the urgency of the moment. What might have been the issue if any son of Mahomet had survived, it is useless to speculate. But certainly the hereditary descent of kingly power was foreign to the sentiment of Arabia. As matters stood, Mahomet seems to have shrunk from anticipating the contingency of his death, and made no preparation for what should follow. But in so far as we may suppose him to have felt his illness mortal and his death impending, the nomination of Abu Bekr to conduct the public prayers (the acknowledged mark of chief or delegated authority) may be held the natural indication of his wish that he should succeed.[1] Apart from the counter-claim of the men of Medîna, there was, in point of fact, neither doubt nor hesitancy in the election, and the counter-claim died away almost as soon as made. The notion of divine right, or even of preferential claim, resting in the Prophet's family, was the growth of a later age.

[1] See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 500.

CHAPTER II.

EXPEDITION OF OSÂMA TO THE SYRIAN BORDER.

A.H. XI. A.D. 632.

Osâma ordered by Mahomet to lead an expedition against the Syrian border, A.H. XI. May, A.D. 632.

ABU BEKR soon had the opportunity of showing that he was resolved to carry out the commands of Mahomet to the very letter. A few weeks previously an expedition had been ordered to avenge by a raid on the Syrian border the disaster which, three years before, had tarnished the Moslem arms. In that reverse Zeid, the Prophet's bosom friend, who led the army, was with many others slain at Mûta; and the more distinctly now to mark the object of the campaign, his son Osâma, though still a youth, was nominated by Mahomet to the command, and bidden to avenge his father's death. The camp was formed at Jorf, a little way on the Syrian road; but during the Prophet's sickness the force remained inactive, uncertain of the issue. When the fatal event took place, Osâma broke up the camp, and carrying back the banner which he had received at the hands of Mahomet, planted it in the court of the Great Mosque, close by the door of Ayesha's apartment.

Abu Bekr deaf to reclamations against its despatch.

The day following his inauguration as Caliph, Abu Bekr took up the banner, and placing it in the hands of Osâma, in token that he was still commander, bade the army again assemble and encamp, as it had done before, at Jorf; and not a man was to be left behind. Obeying the command, the fighting men of Medîna and its neighbourhood flocked again to the camp, and even Omar was amongst the number. While yet preparing to depart, the horizon darkened suddenly.

Report of the Prophet's mortal illness, followed by tidings of his death, had spread like wildfire over the land. From every side there now came rumours of disloyalty, and of the resolve to cast the yoke of Islam off. The sense of the army, and of Osâma himself, was strongly against leaving the city thus defenceless, and the Caliph exposed to the risk of sudden inroad. Omar was deputed to represent this to Abu Bekr, and also to urge (as had been already urged to Mahomet himself[1]) that, if the expedition must proceed, some more experienced general should command. To the first request Abu Bekr replied, calm and unmoved: 'Were the city swarming round with packs of ravening wolves, and I left solitary and alone, the force should go; not a word from my Master's lips shall fall to the ground.' At the second demand the Caliph's anger kindled: 'Thy mother be childless, O son of Khattâb!' he said, seizing Omar by the beard. 'Shall the Prophet of the Lord appoint a man to the command, and I, deposing him, appoint another in his place?' So Omar returned, without gaining either object, to the army.

When all was ready for the march, Abu Bekr repaired to the camp, and accompanied the force a little way on foot. 'Be mounted,' said Osâma to him; 'or else I will dismount and walk by thee.' 'Not so,' replied Abu Bekr; 'I will not mount; I will walk and soil my feet, a little moment, in the ways of the Lord. Verily, every step in the ways of the Lord is equal to the merit of manifold good works, and wipeth out a multitude of sins.' After a while he stopped, and said to Osâma: 'If it be thy will, give Omar leave that he may return with me to the city, for strength and counsel.' So he gave him leave.[2]

He accompanies it a little way on foot. June, A.D. 682.

[1] *Life of Mahomet*, p. 498.

[2] Some others of the chief Companions, Aly, Zobeir, &c., appear also to have remained behind; but they may possibly not have originally formed a part of Osâma's army ordered to reassemble.

And gives Osâma instructions.

The army then halted, to receive the parting injunctions of the Caliph. 'See,' said he, addressing Osâma, 'that thou avoid treachery and deceit. Depart not in any wise from the right. Thou shalt mutilate none; neither shalt thou kill child or aged man, nor any woman. Injure not the date-palm, neither burn it with fire; and cut not down any tree wherein is food for man or beast. Slay not of the flocks or herds or camels, saving for needful sustenance. Ye may eat of the meat which the men of the land shall bring unto you in their vessels, making mention thereon of the name of the Lord. And the monks with shaven heads that spend their lives in monasteries, if they submit, leave them in their cloisters unmolested. Now march forward in the name of the Lord, and may He protect you from sword and pestilence!'

Osâma returns victorious, July and August.

So Abu Bekr returned with Omar to Medîna. Osâma marched by Wâdi al Cora, in the direction of Dûma, Obna, and the highlands south of Syria. The brunt of his attack fell upon the Beni Codhâa, and the semi-Christian tribes which, under the Roman banner, had discomfited and slain his father. That disaster was now avenged in fire and blood. The land was ravaged far and near, and after an absence of two months, the army returned laden with spoil.[1]

Meanwhile stirring events had transpired at Medîna, of which an account is given in the chapter following.

[1] The chronology at this period is uncertain, and the dates only approximate. On the Prophet's death we plunge at once from light into obscurity. For the next two or three years we are left in doubt, not only as to the period, but even as to the sequence of important events and great battles. In the narrative of this expedition, we only know that the army started soon after Abu Bekr's accession, but not before the spirit of rebellion had begun to declare itself, which last, according to one tradition, was within ten days of the Prophet's death.

The length of the expedition varies, according to different traditions, from 40 days to 70.

CHAPTER III.

MEDINA THREATENED.

A.H. XI. JUNE AND JULY, A.H. 632.

Beneficial effects of Osâma's expedition.

IN after days Abu Bekr used to look back with a just pride and satisfaction to his despatch, against a universal reclamation, of Osâma's force. Public opinion was not long in justifying the act and attributing thereto results of essential benefit. The firmness of his attitude inspired the Bedouin tribes with a sense of stability in the government. If the leaders at Medîna had not been confident in their strength at home they would not have sent away this army; and the Arabs, reasoning thus, were restrained from much that they might otherwise have attempted. Still the position was critical, and at times sufficiently alarming.

Courageous attitude of Abu Bekr.

It was indeed a thing of which the brave old Caliph might be proud. 'The Arabs,' so the tradition runs, 'were on all sides rising in rebellion. Apostasy and disaffection began to raise their heads; Christians and Jews to stretch out their necks; and the Faithful were left like a flock of sheep without a shepherd—their Prophet gone, their numbers few, and their foes a multitude.' It was in face of all this that Abu Bekr sent off beyond recall his only force, and left Medîna open and, to the outward eye, defenceless.

Insurrection throughout Arabia.

During the lifetime of Mahomet three rivals had already laid claim to the prophetic office and raised the standard of rebellion. In the south, insurrection had hardly been quelled by the assassination of the 'Veiled Prophet' of Yemen, when tidings of the death of Mahomet made it burst forth with

redoubled violence. Enshrined in the very centre of the peninsula, Moseilama had detached the powerful tribes around Yemâma from their allegiance; and to the north-east, nearer home, Toleiha, the third pretender, was now openly and dangerously hostile.[1] From every quarter, in rapid succession, came the news of spreading disaffection. The legates of Mahomet, the collectors of tithes—all, in fact, who represented the authority of Islam—fled or were expelled. The Faithful were massacred, and some confessors suffered a cruel death. Mecca and Tâyif quivered and vacillated at the first intelligence of the Prophet's decease; in the end, through the strong influence of the Coreish, they stood firm; but they were almost alone. Here and there some few tribes, under loyal, or, it might be, temporising, chiefs, maintained the semblance of obedience; but they were hardly discernible amidst the seething mass of rebellion. Amru, hurrying back from Omân (whither he had been sent by Mahomet as ambassador at the Farewell Pilgrimage), witnessed the whole of Central Arabia either in open revolt or ready to break away on the first demand of tithes, and his report filled the citizens of Medîna with dismay.[2] In truth, Islam had never taken firm hold of the distant provinces; and

[1] See *Life of Mahomet*, chapter 32.

[2] *Ibid.* chapter xxx. Amru hastened home through Bahrein immediately on hearing of Mahomet's death. Corra ibn Hobeira, Chief of the Beni Amir, took him aside, after a hospitable entertainment, and advised, as the only way to avoid revolt; that the tithe upon the Bedouins should be foregone. Amru stormed at him for this; and subsequently, on Corra being brought in a prisoner, advised his execution as an apostate.

On reaching Medîna, Amru made known the disheartening news to his friends, who crowded round him. Omar coming up, all were silent, but he divined what the subject of their converse was: 'I think,' he said, 'that ye were speaking of what we have to fear from the Arab tribes?' On their confessing, he made them swear that they would not discourage the people by letting the matter spread, and added: 'Fear ye not this thing; verily I fear far more what the Arabs will suffer from you, than what ye will suffer from them. Verily if a company of the Corcish were to enter into a cave alone, the Bedouins would follow you into the same. They are a servile crew: wherefore, fear the Lord, and fear not them.'

as for the Bedouins, Mahomet had himself had frequent cause to chide their fickleness. It was fear of punishment, and the lust of plunder, rather than attachment to the faith, which had hitherto held these wild sons of the desert in bondage to the Prophet. The restraints and obligations of Islam were irksome and distasteful; and now, on Mahomet's death well rid of them, they hoped to return to their lawless life.

Demand for exemption from tithes refused by Abu Bekr.

As report after report came in of fresh defection, Abu Bekr could but instruct his officers to hold on where they were able with the loyal few, hoping to tide over the crisis till the return of Osâma's force. For the immediate defence of Medîna he took such measures as were possible. He called in all that remained of the faithful tribes in the neighbourhood, and posted pickets at the various approaches to the city. The turbulent tribes in the near desert to the east were the first to assume a threatening attitude. The Beni Abs and Dzobiân massed there in such numbers 'that the land was straitened by them,' and they parted into two bodies, one at Rabadza,[1] the other at Dzul Cassa, the first station from Medîna on the road to Nejd. The false prophet Toleiha sent his brother with men to help them; but they still vacillated between the claims of the pretender and Islam. At last they bethought themselves of a compromise. They sent a deputation to Abu Bekr, offering to hold by Islam and its ritual if only they were excused the tithe. The strangers bearing the message were welcomed by the chiefs of Medîna, but by the Caliph their advances were indignantly rejected. He would relax not a tittle of the legal dues. 'If ye withhold but the tether of a tithed camel,' said Abu Bekr, bluntly, 'I will fight with you for the same.' With this refusal they retired, and also with the intelligence that the city had but few defenders left. Now was the time, before the army came back, not only for plunder, but to deliver a

[1] Or Abrac. For the Beni Abs and Dzobiân, see *Life of Mahomet*, vol. i. pp. ccxxiv. et seq.

decisive blow. Abu Bekr, foreseeing this, redoubled his precautions. He strengthened the pickets, and set over them the chief men who had remained with him—Aly, Zobeir, Talha, and Abdallah ibn Masûd. For the rest of the people he appointed the Great Mosque a rendezvous. 'The land hath rebelled against us,' he said, 'and they have spied out our nakedness and the weakness of our defence. Ye know not whether they will come upon you by night or come upon you by day, or which of you may be first attacked. They verily hoped that we should have accepted their offer, but we rejected it. Wherefore be vigilant and ready.'

Attack on Medîna repelled.

And so it came to pass. They tarried but three days, when a surprise was attempted from Dzul Cassa. The outposts were on the alert, and kept the assailants at bay while the main guard was hurried up from the Mosque on camels. The Bedouins, hardly prepared for so warm a reception, fled back upon their reserves. They were pursued; but the camels of the Moslems, being used only to draw water for the fields, took fright at a stratagem of the enemy, and turning, fled back to the Mosque.[1] There were no casualties among the Medîna troops, but the rebels were emboldened by the flight of their opponents. Abu Bekr, anticipating a renewed attack, called out every man capable of bearing arms, and spent the night in marshalling his force. Next morning, while yet dark, the Caliph himself led out the little band in regular array, with a centre and two wings.[2] The enemy were taken by surprise at early dawn, and as the sun rose

[1] The riding camels had all been sent away with Osâma's army, and the only ones now available were those used to irrigate the fields and palm-groves. The stratagem was curious. The Bedouins blew out their empty water-skins (*mussucks*), and when thus buoyant and full of air, they kicked them (as you would a foot-ball) in front of the Moslem camels, which, affrighted at the strange sight, took to flight.

[2] The centre and winge were commanded by three sons of Mocarran, a citizen of Medîna. These distinguished themselves on many occasions in the Persian campaign. One of them, Nomân, was killed ten years after in the decisive action of Nehâwend.

were already in full flight. Abu Bekr drove them with slaughter out of Dzul Cassa, and, leaving a portion of his little force as an outpost there, returned with the rest to Medîna.

The affair was comparatively small, but its effect great. As failure would have been disastrous, perhaps fatal, to Islam, so victory was the turning-point in its favour. The power of the Prophet's successor, even without his proper army, to secure the city and beat off his assailants was noised abroad. And soon after, the spirits of the Moslems rose as they saw certain chiefs appear, bringing in the tithes. The tribes they represented, to be sure, were few in contrast with the apostate hordes; but it was an augury of brighter days to come. Safwân and Zibricân, chiefs of two branches of the Beni Temîm, and Adi son of Hâtim from a loyal branch of the Beni Tay, were the first to present their legal offerings to the Caliph. Each was ushered into his presence as an ambassador. 'Nay,' said Abu Bekr; 'they are more than that; they are Messengers of glad tidings, true men, and defenders of the faith.' And the people answered, 'Even so; now the good things that thou didst promise are appearing.'

Good effect of the victory.

Tradition delights to ascribe with pious gratitude the preservation of Islam to the aged Caliph's faith and fortitude. 'On the death of Mahomet,' we are told, 'it wanted but little, and the faithful had utterly perished. But the Lord strengthened the heart of Abu Bekr, and stablished us thereby in the resolve to give place, no not for one moment, to the apostates; and to say but these three words—*Submission, Exile,* or the *Sword.*' It was the simple faith in Mahomet of Abu Bekr which fitted him for the task, and made him carry out the law of his Master to the very letter. But for him, Islam would have melted away in compromise with the Bedouin tribes, or might have perished in the throes of its birth.

Saving of Islam due to Abu Bekr.

CHAPTER IV.

RETURN OF OSÂMA. EXPEDITIONS FORMED AGAINST THE APOSTATE TRIBES THROUGHOUT ARABIA.

A.H. XI. SEPT.–OCT. A.D. 632.

Osâma's return. Jumâd II. A.H. XI. Sept. A.D. 632.

OSÂMA at last appeared, and Medîna, for two months left unprotected, was relieved from further danger. The army returned laden with booty. The royal Fifth was delivered to the Caliph, and by him distributed among the people.[1]

Expedition against Beni Abs and Dzobiân.

Abu Bekr lost no time in now following up the advantage he had gained over the Beni Abs and Dzobiân. Driven back from Dzul Cassa, they had retired to Rabadza, and vented their anger in destroying by cruel deaths the faithful followers of the Prophet still left amongst them. Deeply moved at the fate of these confessors, Abu Bekr took a solemn oath that 'he would by the like deaths destroy as many of them as they had slain, or even more.'

Abu Bekr chastises the rebel tribes at Rabadza.

Putting Osâma in command of the city, and leaving the army there for a little while to recruit, Abu Bekr took the remaining force and marched again towards Rabadza. The chief men expostulated with him on going forth to fight in person. If a commander were killed in action, his place could easily be filled; but if the Caliph fell, their head and ruler would be gone. 'Nay,' replied Abu Bekr; 'but I will go forth, and will be your comrade even as one of your own selves.'[2] So they marched on, and coming up

[1] For the royal Fifth, see *Sura*, viii. 41.

[2] There is a tradition that when Abu Bekr issued, sword in hand, to go to Dzul Cassa, Aly caught hold of his bridle, exclaiming: 'O Caliph, I say to thee what the Prophet said to thee on the day of Ohod: *Put up thy sword*

with the enemy at Abrac, completely discomfited them, killing some, and taking others prisoners. The Beni Abs and Dzobiân fled to Toleiha, and joined his army at Bozâkha. Thereupon Abu Bekr confiscated their pasture-lands, and declared them to be for ever a public domain reserved for the stud and camels of the State. On eventually submitting, they found themselves thus debarred from re-entry; but this was of comparatively little consequence, as they had, in the end, ample compensation in the conquered lands beyond Arabia. After some days spent at Rabadza, the Caliph returned to Medîna.

Islam must be reimposed on all Arabia.

The army by this time was refitted. The tithes had begun to come in from many neighbouring tribes in token of submission. Medîna was no longer in peril, and the citizens breathed freely. But a heavy burden still lay upon the Caliph. Islam was to be the faith of all Arabia;—'Throughout the peninsula there shall be no second creed,' was the behest of Mahomet on his death-bed. False prophets must be crushed; rebels vanquished; apostates reclaimed or exterminated; and the supremacy vindicated of Islam. It was, in short, the mission of Abu Bekr to redeem the dying Prophet's words.

Eleven expeditions despatched to different parts of Arabia.

With this great purpose, Abu Bekr went forth a second time to Dzul Cassa, and there summoned the whole available forces of Islam and all the loyal chiefs around him. He divided them into eleven independent columns, and over every one appointed a distinguished leader, to whom (following the example of his Master) he presented a banner. Arabia was mapped out, and each detachment given a province to reclaim, with marching orders, where to begin and what course to take. Thus Khâlid ibn Saîd was named

again and expose us not to lose thee, for, by the Lord! if we were to lose thee, the prop of Islam were gone.' Whereupon Abu Bekr returned and went not forth.

But this probably refers to the expeditions shortly after sent out in all directions from Dzul Cassa, as narrated below, and to Abu Bekr's return to Medîna at that time.

for the Syrian border; Khâlid ibn Welîd was to subdue Toleiha; and Ikrima with Shorahbîl, Moseilama; Mohâjir was sent to Yemen; Alâ to Bahrein; Hodzeifa and Arfaja to Mâhra; and Amru against the Beni Codhâa. And so by this great scheme, in course of time, no spot would be left unconquered. The troops retained at home were few; for few were needed now.[1]

Proclamation summoning apostates to repent. Oct., A.D. 632.

Having despatched the various expeditions, Abu Bekr returned to Medîna. There his first concern was to publish a summons to the apostate tribes, commanding them everywhere to repent and submit themselves, on which condition they should be pardoned, and received back into Islam. Such as refused would be attacked, their fighting men cut to pieces, and their women and children taken captive. This summons was sent by the hand of envoys to every province and rebellious tribe. The Adzân, or call to prayer, was to be the test of faith; if that were heard and responded to, good and well; if not, the people were apostate, and as such to be attacked.

Abu Bekr did not again go out to fight.

Abu Bekr never again left Medîna to lead his troops. Some say that afterwards he regretted this; but it is not likely that he did so. Medîna, where he continued to reside, was his proper place. From it, as a central point, he was able to direct the movement of his commanders all over the peninsula; and with operations in so many different quarters to control he could not have been better situated.

No chief 'Companion' appointed to a command.

It is more open to remark that none of the more distinguished Companions of the Prophet were appointed to commands. The same was the case with Omar, who was known

[1] The notion given by tradition is that these eleven columns were despatched on their several expeditions all at once from Dzul Cassa, in presence of Abu Bekr. This of course is possible, but it is very improbable. The arrangements could hardly have been so speedily cut and dry as that supposes. It is enough to know that, sooner or later, about this time, or shortly after, these eleven expeditions started. Some of the eleven, as given by tradition, seem hardly to have been separate commands.

to say that he purposely refrained from nominating them to any government, both out of respect to their dignity,[1] and also to strengthen his own hands by having them about him as advisers. This latter reason may also well have weighed with Abu Bekr, who used to take counsel on all important matters with the leading Companions. Still, it is singular that men like Aly and Zobeir, who took so prominent a part in the battles of Mahomet, should now altogether disappear from operations in the field.

[1] Meaning, no doubt, that as governors they would have been immediately subordinate to himself, exposed to much drudgery, and liable to be called to account for their stewardship.

CHAPTER V.

CAMPAIGN OF KHALID AGAINST THE FALSE PROPHET TOLEIHA.

A.H. XI. Nov. A.D. 632.

Materials for the first epoch imperfect.

THE materials for our story at this point are few, obscure, and disconnected. The scene of confusion that reigned throughout Arabia is presented to our view in but dim and hazy outline. With the Prophet's life, *Tradition proper* ends. The prodigious stores of oral testimony, which light up in minutest detail the career of Mahomet, suddenly stop. The grand object of tradition was, from the oral teaching and example of the Prophet, to supplement by authoritative rulings what was wanting in the Corân. That motive ceased with the death of Mahomet, and with it tradition, as such, ceases also.[1] What history we have for the period immediately succeeding is in the form of loose fragments—the statements, it may be, of eyewitnesses, or gathered as hearsay from the memory of Arab tribes, or from legends in the neighbouring conquered lands. Hence it is that, after the death of Mahomet, we are left for a time to grope our way by evidence always scanty and often discrepant. The further back we go, the obscurity is the greater; and it is most so while, in the first year of Abu Bekr's Caliphate, Islam was struggling for existence. There was little room then for thought beyond the safety of the moment; and when at length the struggle was over, nothing

[1] For an account of this marvellous system of oral tradition, see the Essay in the *Life of Mahomet* on *the Sources for the Biography*. The halo surrounding the Prophet casts something of its brightness on the lives also of his chief Companions, whose biographies are given by tradition in considerable detail; and from them we can gather something of the early history incidentally.

was left but the sense of relief from a terrible danger, and the roughest outline of the way in which it had been achieved. No date is given for any one of the many battles fought throughout the year. Here and there we may be guided by the apparent sequence of events; but as the various expeditions were for the most part independent of one another, and proceeding simultaneously all over the peninsula, even this indication too often fails.[1]

Arrangement of narrative of campaigns against apostate tribes.

Such being the case, the thread of our narrative here must run an arbitrary course. Taking Tabari as our guide, we begin with the campaign of Khâlid against Toleiha in the north-east, and follow him thence southward to Yemâma. We shall then take up the provinces assigned to other leaders, as they lie geographically around the coast—Bahrein, Omân, Hadhramaut and Yemen.

Khâlid ibn Welîd.

After Abu Bekr and Omar, the most prominent figure in the story of the early Caliphate is without doubt that of Khâlid, son of Welîd. More to him than to any other is it due that Islam spread with such marvellous rapidity. A dashing soldier, and brave even to rashness, his courage was tempered by a cool and ever-ready judgment. His conduct on the battle-fields which decided the fate of the Persian empire and of the Byzantine rule in Syria, must rank him as one of the greatest generals of the world. Over and again he cast the die in crises where loss would have been destruction to Islam, but always with consummate skill and heroism which won the victory. The carnage following his arms gained for him the title of *The Sword of God*; and so

[1] So uncertain is the chronology of this period, that Ibn Ishâc makes the campaigns in Yemâma, Bahrein, and Yemen to be in the twelfth year of the Hegira; whereas the received, and manifestly correct, account, as 'gathered from the learned of Syria,' is that the operations against the apostate tribes throughout Arabia were brought practically to an end in the 11th year of the Hegira. Only one exception is mentioned (and that somewhat obscurely) of a campaign against Rabia, who was beaten by Khâlid. Amongst the spoils of the expedition is mentioned the daughter of Rabia, who, as a slave-girl, fell to the lot of Aly.

little regard had he for loss of life even amongst his own followers, that he could wed the freshly-made widow of his enemy on the field yet moistened by his people's blood. He had already distinguished himself in the annals of Islam. Fighting, at the first, on the side of the Coreish, the defeat of the Prophet at Ohod was due mainly to his prowess. At the capture of Mecca, now in the ranks of the faithful, his was the only column which shed blood; and shortly after, the cruel massacre of an unoffending tribe brought down upon him the stern reproof of Mahomet.[1] At the battle of Mûta, three years before, he had given a signal proof of his generalship, when, the Moslem army having been routed by Roman legions, and its leaders one after another slain, he saved the shattered remnants by skilful and intrepid tactics from destruction.[2] It was this Khâlid whom Abu Bekr now sent forth against the rebel prophets Toleiha and Moseilama.

Khâlid marches towards the Beni Tay.

His column, by far the strongest of the eleven, was composed of the flower of the Refugees from Mecca, as well as of the men of Medîna, which latter marched under their own officer, Thâbit son of Cays.[3] To divert the enemy's attention, Abu Bekr gave out that the destination was Kheibar, and (to strike the greater terror into the insurgents) that he intended himself to join it there with a fresh contingent. Khâlid, however, was not long in quitting the northern route. Striking off to the right, he made direct for the mountain range of Ajâ and Salmâ, the seat of the Beni Tay, and not distant from the scene of Toleiha's revolt among the Beni Asad.

Toleiha, the false prophet.

Of the doctrines of Toleiha, as of the other pretenders to the prophetic office, we know little, nor indeed anything at

[1] *Life of Mahomet*, p. 427. [2] *Ibid.* p. 409.

[3] We have met Thâbit before as a poet of renown and a chief of influence, especially among the Beni Khazraj (*Ibid.* p. 449).

The strength of Khâlid's column is nowhere mentioned, but, adverting to the great number slain at Yemâma (although he was reinforced meanwhile from Medîna), it could hardly have been less than twelve or fifteen hundred, besides the 1,000 men contributed, as we shall see immediately, by the Beni Tay.

all to show wherein the secret of influence lay. A few doggrel verses and dark or childish sayings are all that the contemptuous voice of tradition has transmitted of their teaching, if such it can be called. So far as appears, it was a mere travesty of Islam. Toleiha forbad prostration during worship. 'The Lord,' he said, 'hath not commanded that ye should soil your foreheads in the dust, neither that ye should double up your backs in prayer.' Similarly Moseilama and Sajâh remitted two of the five daily times of prayer. That four pretenders (for Sajâh the prophetess was also such) should have arisen in different parts of Arabia, and, even before the death of Mahomet, drawn multitudes after them, would seem to imply something in their doctrine deeper than senseless rhymes and more specious than petty variations of the Moslem rite.[1] So much is clear, that the spiritual sense of Arabia had been quickened by the preaching of Mahomet, and that his example had not only suggested the claims of others, but also contributed to their success. Jealousy of Mecca and Medîna, moreover, and impatience of the trammels of Islam, were powerful incentives for Bedouins to cast in their lot with these pretenders. Thus the Beni Ghatafân, who before their submission to Mahomet were in league with the Tay and Asad tribes, had recently fallen out with them and lost some of their pasture-lands. Oyeina,[2] chief of the Ghatafân, now counselled a return to their old relations with the Beni Asad. 'Let us go back,' he said, 'to our ancient alliance which we had before Islam with them, for never since we gave it up have I known the boundaries of our pasture-lands. A prophet of our own is better than a prophet

Bedouin jealousy of Mecca and Medina.

[1] Had there been anything else in Toleiha's teaching, there is no reason why we should not have heard of it, as Toleiha, when he returned to the faith, became a distinguished champion of Islam. There may, however, have been a disinclination on his part to dwell on this chapter of his life. Al Kindy, the Christian, speaks in his Apology with greater respect of Moseilama's sayings as calculated to draw off the followers of Mahomet. But I see no evidence of this. See the *Apology of Al Kindy*, p. 31 (Smith & Elder, 1881).

[2] A name familiar to us in the *Life of Mahomet*, see p. 323, &c.

of the Coreish. Besides, Mahomet is dead, but Toleiha is alive.' So saying, Oyeina, followed by 700 warriors of his tribe, joined the false prophet at Bozâkha.

Khâlid reclaims the Beni Tay.

When first he heard of the heresy, Mahomet had deputed Dhirâr to the Beni Asad, with instructions to rally the faithful amongst them, and with their aid to crush Toleiha. The two encountered one another, and the sword of Dhirâr, we are told, glanced off from the person of his adversary. On this, a rumour spread abroad that Toleiha led a charmed life, and thenceforward his cause prospered. After their defeat at Abrac, the insurgents, as we have seen, flocked to Toleiha at Bozâkha, and he was further strengthened by the adhesion of two influential branches of the Beni Tay.[1] Dhirâr found his position at last so insecure that he fled to Medîna. The great family of the Beni Tay, however, was not wholly disloyal, for Adî (as above mentioned) had already presented the legal dues to Abu Bekr on behalf of some part of it. Adî therefore was now sent forward by Khâlid to his people, in the hope of detaching them from Toleiha's cause. He found them in no friendly humour. 'The Father of the Foal!' they cried (for such was the sobriquet contemptuously used for Abu Bekr[2]); 'thou shalt not persuade us to do homage to him.' 'Think better of it,' replied Adî; 'an army approacheth which ye cannot withstand. Ye shall know full soon that he is no foal, but a lusty stallion. Wherefore see ye to it.' Alarmed at his words, they begged for time that they might recall the two branches which had joined Toleiha, 'For,' said they, 'he will surely hold them hostages, or else put them to death.' So Khâlid halted three days, and in

[1] The Beni Jadîla and Beni Ghauth.

[2] *Abu Bekr* means 'Father of the young camel,' and they called him by the nick-name *Ab ul Fasîl*, 'Father of the foal.' Adî answered, 'He is not *Ab ul Fasîl*, but, if you like it, *Ab ul Fahl*,' 'Father of the stallion,' i.e. endowed with power and vigour.

In the Persian version of Tabari, the surname is by a mistake given as *Ab ul Fadhl*, 'the Father of Excellence,' and is applied to Khâlid.

the end they not only tendered submission, but joined him with 1,000 horse, 'the flower of the land of Tay, and the bravest of them.'

Thus reinforced, Khâlid advanced against Toleiha. On the march his army was exasperated by finding the bodies of two of their scouts—one a warrior of note named Okkâsha—who had been slain, and left by Toleiha to be trampled on the road.[1] The armies met at Bozâkha, and the combat is said to have been hot and long. At last (so we are told) the tide of battle was turned by certain utterances of Toleiha, who was on the field in his prophetic garb of hair. Oyeina fought bravely with his 700 of the Beni Fezâra.[2] The situation becoming critical, he turned to Toleiha, saying, 'Hath any message come to thee from Gabriel?' '*Not yet*,' answered the prophet. A second time he asked, and received the same reply. 'Yes,' said Toleiha, a little after, 'a message now hath come.' 'And what is it?' inquired Oyeina eagerly. 'Thus saith Gabriel to me, *Thou shalt have a millstone like unto his, and an affair shalt happen that thou wilt not forget.*' 'Away with thee!' cried Oyeina scornfully; 'no doubt the Lord knoweth that an affair will happen that thou shall not forget! Ho, ye Beni Fezâra, every man to his tent!' So they turned to go; and thereupon the army fled. Toleiha escaped with his wife to Syria. His subsequent history proved him a brave warrior; but he had a poor cause, and the combat could hardly have been very severe, as no mention is made of loss on either side.

Battle of Bozâkha.

His sequel is curious. At the first, Toleiha took refuge with the Beni Kelb on the Syrian frontier; then when the Beni Asad were pardoned, he returned to them and again embraced Islam. Passing Medîna soon after on pilgrimage,

Toleiha's sequel.

[1] Okkâsha was a warrior of renown and leader of some expeditions in the time of Mahomet.

[2] The sub-tribe of the Beni Ghatafân to which Oyeina belonged.

he was seized and carried to Abu Bekr, who set him at liberty, saying, 'Let him alone. What have I to do with him? The Lord hath now verily guided him into the right path.' When Omar succeeded to the Caliphate, he presented himself to take the oath of allegiance. At first Omar spoke roughly to him: 'Thou art he that killed Okkâsha and his comrade. I love thee not.' 'Was it not better,' answered Toleiha, 'that they by my hand should obtain the crown of martyrdom, rather than that I by theirs should have perished in hell-fire?' When he had sworn allegiance, the Caliph asked him concerning his oracular gift,[1] and whether anything yet remained of it. 'Ah,' he replied, 'it was but a puff or two, as from a pair of bellows.' So he returned to his tribe, and went forth with them to the wars in Irâc, where, in the great struggle with Persia, he became a hero of renown.

Beni Asad and other tribes received back into Islam.

After the battle of Bozâkha, the Beni Asad, fearing lest their families should fall into the conqueror's hand, tendered their submission. The Beni Aâmir, Suleim, and Hawâzin, tribes which had stood aloof watching the event, now came in, and received from Khâlid the same terms as the Beni Asad. They resumed the profession of Islam with all its obligations, and in proof thereof brought in the tithe. A full amnesty was then accorded, on condition only that those who during the apostasy had taken the life of any Moslem should be delivered up. These were now (to carry out the Caliph's vow) put to the like death as that which they had inflicted. If they had speared their victims, cast them over precipices, drowned them in wells, or burned them in the fire, the persecutors were now subjected to the same barbarous and cruel fate.

[1] *Kahânat*, the term used for the gift possessed by the heathen soothsayers. The sayings ascribed to Toleiha are childish in the extreme. For example: 'I command that ye make a millstone with a handle, and the Lord shall cast it on whom he pleaseth;' and again, 'By the pigeons and the doves, and the hungry falcons, I swear that our kingdom shall in a few years reach to Irâc and Syria.'

A body of malcontents under Omm Siml discomfited.

Khâlid stayed at Bozâkha for a month, receiving the submission of the people in the vicinity and their tithes. Troops of horse scoured the country, and struck terror into the vacillating tribes around. In only one direction was serious opposition met. Certain malcontents from amongst the penitent and returning people, unable to brook submission, gathered themselves together in a defiant attitude. They had yet to learn that the gripe of Islam was stern and crushing. Their restless and marauding spirit preferred, perhaps, even as a forlorn hope, to hold their enemy at bay; or they had sinned beyond the hope of grace. Thus they assembled in a great multitude around Omm Siml, daughter of a famous chieftain of the Ghatafân. This lady's mother, Omm Kirfa, had been captured and put to a cruel death by Mahomet. She herself had waited upon Ayesha as a captive maid in the Prophet's household; but the haughty spirit of her race survived the servitude. Mounted on her mother's war-camel, she led the force herself, and incited the insurgents to a bold resistance. Khâlid proclaimed the reward of one hundred camels to him who should maim her camel. It was soon disabled; and, Omm Siml slain, the rout was easy.[1]

Oyeina, Corra, and Alcama released by Abu Bekr.

In this campaign the only persons taken captive were those who had deeply compromised themselves as leaders in rebellion. They were sent by Khâlid to Abu Bekr. The chief were Oyeina, Corra, and Alcama. The story of this last, a chief of the Beni Aâmir, is curious. After the surrender of Tâyif he had fled to Syria. On the death of Mahomet he returned, and incited his people to rebellion. An expedition sent in pursuit of him had seized his family, and carried them off captive to Medîna. He

[1] For the barbarous execution of Omm Kirfa, see *Life of Mahomet*, chapter xviii. The malcontents here gathered together were from all the tribes against which Khâlid had now been engaged in warlike operations—the Ghatafân, Suleim, Hawâzin, Tay, and Asad.

fled; but as all the country-side had now submitted, there was no longer any way of escape, and he was seized and delivered up to Khâlid. Corra, of the same tribe, was one of those whom Amru, on his journey from Omân, had found vacillating, and of whom he brought an evil report to Abu Bekr. Oyeina, the marauding chieftain of the Fezâra, had often been the terror of Medîna. When the city was besieged by the Coreish, he offered his assistance on certain humiliating terms, which the Prophet was near accepting; and he was one of the many influential leaders 'whose hearts,' after the battle of Honein and siege of Tâyif, 'had been reconciled' by the Prophet's largesses. He was now led into Medîna with the rest in chains, his hands tied up behind his back. The citizens crowded round to gaze at the fallen chief, and the very children smote him with their hands, crying out, 'Enemy of the Lord, and apostate!' 'Not so,' said Oyeina bravely; 'I am no apostate; I never was a believer until now.'[1] The Caliph listened patiently

[1] It was a vain excuse, but was founded on the principle that no bloodshed, treachery, sin, or excess of any sort, *before conversion*, cast any blot on the believer; but that *apostasy*, however, repented of, left a stigma which could never wholly be effaced. At first the Caliph would receive no aid whatever from any tribe or individual who had apostatised; and, though when levies came to be needed urgently, the ban was taken off, still to the end no apostate chief was allowed a large command, or put over more than a hundred men.

Among the Beni Suleim was Abu Shajra, son of the famous elegiac poetess, Al Khansa. A martial piece which he composed in reference to an engagement at this time contains the verse:—

'And I slaked my thirsty spear in the blood of Khâlid's troop.'

Some years after, he visited Medîna, while Omar was distributing the tithe among the poor Arabs around the city: 'Give to me,' said the stranger, 'for I, too, am poor and needy.' 'And who art thou?' asked Omar. Being told his name, he cried out in anger: 'Art not thou the same that said, *I slaked my thirsty spear*, &c.?' and he beat him about the head with his whip till the poet was fain to run off to his camel. A poem complaining of this treatment has been preserved, in which he says:—

'Abu Hafs (Omar) grudged me of his gifts,
Although every one that shaketh even a tree getteth at least the leaves it sheddeth.'

Such poetical fragments, in the scantiness of the materials for this early period, give at many points reality and fulness to the story.

to the appeal of the captives. He forgave them, and commanded their immediate release.

Fujâa, a freebooter, burned alive.

Abu Bekr, as a rule, was mild in his judgments, and even generous to the fallen foe. But on one occasion the treachery of a rebel chief irritated him to an act of barbarous cruelty. Fujâa, a leader of some note amongst the Beni Suleim, under pretence of fighting against the insurgents in his neighbourhood, obtained from the Caliph arms and accoutrements for his band. Thus equipped, he abused the trust, and, becoming a freebooter, attacked and plundered Moslem and Apostate indiscriminately. Abu Bekr thereupon wrote letters to a loyal chief in that quarter to raise a force and go against the brigand. Hard pressed, Fujâa challenged his adversary to a parley, and asserted that he held a commission from the Caliph not inferior to his. 'If thou speakest true,' answered the other, 'then lay aside thy weapons and accompany me to Abu Bekr.' He did so, and followed, without further resistance, to Medîna. No sooner did he appear than the Caliph, enraged at his treachery, cried aloud: 'Go forth with this traitor to the burial-ground, and there burn him with fire.' So, hard by in Backî, the graveyard of the city, they gathered wood, and heaping it together at the *Mosalla*, or place of prayer, kindled the pile, and cast Fujâa on it.

Abu Bekr regrets the act.

If the charges were well founded, which we have no ground for doubting,[1] Fujâa deserved the fate of a bandit; but to cast him alive into the flames was a savage act, for which Abu Bekr was sorry afterwards. 'It is one of the three things,' he used to say, 'which I would I had not done.'

[1] The account as here given is from Abu Bekr's own son. According to other traditions, Fujâa employed the arms, &c., which he got from the Caliph, in attacking the loyal sections of his own and neighbouring tribes, and was therefore a pure rebel. It is more probable that he carried his marauding expeditions indiscriminately against loyal and disloyal, wherever there was the chance of plunder. Even in this view Fujâa deserved exemplary punishment, had it been of a less barbarous kind.

CHAPTER VI.

STORY OF MALIK IBN NOWEIRA.

A.H. XI. A.D. 632.

Khâlid advances south. A.H. XI. November (?) A.D. 632.

HAVING subdued the Beni Asad, and other tribes inhabiting the hills and desert to the north-west of Medîna, Khâlid now bent his steps southward, against the Beni Temîm who occupied the plateau towards the Persian Gulf.

The Beni Temîm.

This great tribe had from time immemorial spread itself with multitudinous branches over the pasture-lands and settlements lying between Yemâma and the delta of the Euphrates. Some of its clans professed Christianity, but the greater portion were heathen. They used in past times to have frequent passages, often of a hostile character, with Persia.[1] Most part of this people had submitted to the claims of Mahomet, and the oratorical contest between their embassy and the poets of Medîna forms a curious episode in the Prophet's life.[2] His death had produced amongst them the same unsettlement and apostasy as elsewhere. Abu Bekr's first early success resulted, as we have seen, in bringing some of their chiefs to Medîna with the tithes. Meanwhile a strange complication had arisen which embroiled the Beni Yerbóa, one of their clans, commanded by the famous Mâlik ibn Noweira, and eventually brought Khâlid on the scene.

It was no less than the advent of Sajâh, a prophetess, at

[1] See *Life of Mahomet*, vol. i. chap. iii. Some of the sub-tribes were great and powerful, as the Beni Hantzala, Mâlik, Imrulcays, Dârim; and here the Beni Yerbóa.

[2] *Ibid.* ch. xxvii.

the head of a great host from Mesopotamia. She was descended from the Beni Yerbóa, but her family had migrated north, and joined the Beni Taghlib, among whom in Mesopotamia she had been brought up as a Christian. How long and by what steps she had assumed the prophetic office, and what (if any) were her peculiar tenets, we do not know; for nothing of hers excepting some childish verses has been preserved. At the head of the Taghlib and other Christian tribes,[1] each led by its own captain, she had crossed into Arabia, hoping to profit by the confusion that followed on the death of Mahomet, and was now on her way to attack Medîna. Reaching the seats of the Beni Temîm, she summoned to her presence the Beni Yerbóa, her own clan, and promised them the kingdom, should victory crown her arms. They joined her standard, with Mâlik ibn Noweira at their head. The other clans of the Beni Temîm refused to acknowledge the prophetess; and so, diverted from her design upon Medîna, she turned her arms against them. In a series of combats, though supported by Mâlik, she was worsted. Then, having made terms and exchanged prisoners, she bethought her of attacking the rival prophet, Moseilama of Yemâma, whose story I must here in some part anticipate.

Sajâh the prophetess gains over Mâlik ibn Noweira, chief of Beni Yerbóa.

Moseilama was strongly supported by his own people, the Beni Hanîfa, in his claim to be their prophet and ruler; but he now felt that the meshes of Abu Bekr were closing round him. The Caliph's officers were rallying the yet loyal or vacillating chiefs in Hejer; and Khâlid, whom Moseilama dreaded most of all, was behind. Tidings of the approach of a new enemy at this crisis added to his perplexity; and he therefore sent a friendly message to the prophetess to come and meet him. She came, and they found their sentiments so much in unison that they cemented the alliance by marriage. Moseilama conceded to her one half-share of the revenues of

Sajâh, having married Moseilama, retires to Mesopotamia.

[1] The Beni Iyâdh, Namir, and Sheibân. We shall meet them again in the Irâc campaign.

Yemâma—the share, he said, which belonged to the Coreish, but which, by their tyranny and violence, they had forfeited. After a few days she departed again to her own country, leaving a party with three of her officers to collect the stipulated tribute. Like a meteor, this strange personage disappeared as soon almost as she had startled Arabia by her advent; and we hear no more of her.[1]

Mâlik ibn Noweira and the Beni Yerbóa attacked by Khâlid.

Khâlid, flushed with victory, was now drawing near, and most of the branches of the Temîm were forward in tendering their submission to him. At this critical juncture, the withdrawal of Sajâh, and his own previous doubtful attitude, left Mâlik ibn Noweira at the head of the Beni Yerbóa in a position of some perplexity, and he was undecided how to act.[2] On the other hand, conflicting news divided the Moslem camp. For some reason Khâlid was bent on attacking the Beni Yerbóa. The men of Medîna[3] were equally opposed to the design, for which they alleged that Khâlid had from the Caliph no authority. It would

[1] Sajâh, it is said, lived quietly with her tribe after this in the profession of Christianity, until with them she was converted to Islam. There is a childish tale that on returning from the hasty marriage, her army, scandalised that she had received no dower, made her go back and ask Moseilama, who received her roughly, refusing her admittance; but, in lieu of dower, agreed to remit two of the daily prayers imposed by Mahomet.

By some of the historians the interview between Moseilama and Sajâh is drawn (happily a rare case in these annals) in language of gross indelicacy. The pruriency suggesting this, is the more gratuitous, as we are told, almost in the same breath, that Moseilama's tenets were rather of an ascetic turn. His system enjoined prayer and fasting, and prohibited (so the tradition runs) cohabitation after the birth of a son, to be resumed only, if the child died, till the birth of another. But our knowledge of the life and doctrines of these pretenders to prophecy is really too scanty to warrant us in pronouncing judgment upon them.

Belâdzori and Ibn Khaldûn are among the few who have here kept their pages clean. Gibbon characteristically seizes on the passage.

[2] In a passage of Tabari (vol. i. p. 188) it is stated that when Amru passed through these regions with a column to clear the roads, he and Mâlik had words with each other. It is possible, therefore, that Khâlid may have had a stronger case against Mâlik than appears.

[3] That is, the *Ansârs*, as opposed to the *Refugees*, i.e. the men of Medina, as opposed to the Coreish and men of Mecca.

have been better for him had he listened to the remonstrance. But he replied haughtily, 'I am commander. In the absence of orders, it is for me to decide. I will march against Mâlik ibn Noweira with the men of Mecca, and with such others as choose to follow me. I compel no man.' So he went forward and left the malcontents behind. These, however, thought better of it, and rejoined the army. Khâlid marched straight upon Bitâh, the head-quarters of Mâlik, but he found not a soul upon the spot. It was utterly deserted.

Mâlik brought a prisoner into Khâlid's camp;

In fact, Mâlik had resolved on submission, though his proud spirit rebelled against presenting himself before Khâlid. He knew the ordinance of Abu Bekr, that none but they who resisted his arms, and refused the call to prayer, should be molested. So he told his people that there was no longer use in opposing this new way, but that, bowing down, they should suffer the wave to pass over them: 'Break up your camp,' he said, 'and depart every one to his house.' Khâlid finding things thus, was not content, but, treating the neighbourhood as enemy's land, sent forth bands everywhere to slay and plunder, and take captive all that offered opposition or failed to respond to the call for prayer. Amongst others, Mâlik was brought in with his wife and a party of his people. When challenged, they had replied that they too were Moslems. 'Why, then, these weapons?' it was asked. So they laid aside their arms and were led as captives to the camp. As they passed by Khâlid, Mâlik cried aloud to him, 'Thy master never gave command for this.' '"*Thy* master," sayest thou?' was the scornful reply of Khâlid; 'then, rebel, by thine own admission, he is not thine!'

and, with other prisoners put to death.

The captors differed in their evidence. Some averred that the prisoners had offered resistance. Others, with Abu Catâda, a citizen of Medîna, at their head, deposed that they had declared themselves Moslems, and at once complied

with the call to prayer. So they were remanded till morning under an armed guard. The night set in cold and stormy, and Khâlid (such is his explanation), with the view of protecting them from its inclemency, gave the guard command 'to *wrap* their prisoners.' The word was ambiguous, signifying in another dialect [1] not 'to wrap,' but 'to *slay*,' and Dhirâr, commandant of the guard, taking it in that sense, put the prisoners, and with them Mâlik, forthwith to the sword. Khâlid, hearing the uproar, hurried forth; but all was over, and he retired, exclaiming, 'When the Lord hath determined a thing, the same cometh verily to pass.' But the fate of Mâlik was not thus easily to be set at rest. He was a chief of name and influence, and a poet of some celebrity. The men of Medîna who had opposed the advance were shocked at his cruel fate. Abu Catâda roundly asserted the responsibility of Khâlid. 'This is thy work!' he said; and, though chided for it, he persisted in the charge. He declared that never again would he serve under Khâlid's banner. In company with Motammim, Mâlik's brother, he set out at once for Medîna, and there laid a formal complaint before the Caliph. Omar, with his native impetuosity, took up the cause of the Yerbóa chief. Khâlid had given point to the allegations of his enemies by marrying Leila, the beautiful widow of his victim, on the spot. From this scandalous act, Omar drew the worst conclusion. 'He hath conspired to slay a believer,' he said, 'and hath gone in unto his wife.' He was instant with Abu Bekr that the offender should be degraded and put in bonds, saying, 'The sword of Khâlid, dipped thus in violence and outrage, must be sheathed.' 'Not so,' replied the Caliph (of whom it is said that he never degraded one of his commanders); 'the sword which the Lord hath made bare against the heathen, shall I sheathe the same? That be

[1] In the Kinânite.

far from me.' Nevertheless, he summoned Khâlid to answer for the charge.

Khâlid exonerated by Abu Bekr;

Khâlid lost no time in repairing to Medîna. He went up straightway to the Great Mosque, and entered it in his rough field costume, his clothes rubbed rusty with his girded armour, and his turban coiled rudely about the head with arrows stuck in it. As he passed along the courtyard towards the Caliph's place, Omar could not restrain himself, but seizing the arrows from his turban, broke them over his shoulders, and abused him as hypocrite, murderer, and adulterer. Khâlid, not knowing but that Abu Bekr might be of the same mind, answered not a word, but passed into the Caliph's presence. There he told his story, and the explanation was accepted by Abu Bekr;—only he chided him roughly for having thus incontinently wedded his victim's widow, and run counter to the custom and feelings of the Arabs in celebrating his nuptials on the field. As Khâlid again passed Omar, he lightly rallied him in words which showed that he had been exonerated. Motammim then pressed the claim, as one of honour, for payment of his brother's blood-money, and release of the prisoners that remained. For the release Abu Bekr gave command, but the payment he declined.

but held guilty by Omar.

Omar remained unconvinced of the innocence of Khâlid, and still was of opinion that he should be withdrawn from his command. He persevered in pressing this view upon Abu Bekr, who would reply, 'Omar, hold thy peace! Refrain thy tongue from Khâlid. He gave an order, and the order was misunderstood.' But Omar heeded not. He neither forgave nor forgot, as in the sequel we shall see.

Mâlik's death commemorated in verse by his brother.

The scandal was the greater, because Mâlik ibn Noweira was a chief renowned for his generosity and princely virtues, as well as for poetic talent. His brother, Motammim, a poet likewise of no mean fame, commemorated his tragic end in many touching verses. Omar loved to listen to his

elegies; and he used to tell Motammim that if he had himself possessed the poetic gift, he would have had no higher ambition than to mourn in such verse over the fate of his own brother Zeid, who shortly after fell at Yemâma.

The affair leaves a stain on Khâlid's fame.

The materials are too meagre to judge conclusively whether the right in this grave matter is on the side of Omar or of the Caliph, Abu Bekr. Although the hostile bias of Khâlid against Mâlik led undoubtedly to the raid upon his tribe and the harsh treatment which followed thereupon, still, with the conflicting evidence, we may hold the deeper charge unproven. But in wedding the widow of his enemy while his blood (shed as we are to believe in misconception of his order) was fresh upon the ground, Khâlid, if he gave no colour to darker suspicions, yet transgressed the proprieties even of Arab life, and justified the indictment of unbridled passion and cold-blooded self-indulgence.[2]

[1] A full account of Mâlik and Motammim, with copious extracts from their poetry, will be found in Nöldeke's *Poesie der alten Araber*, Hanover, 1864. Arab critics take Motammim as the model of elegiac poets, both for beauty of expression and intensity of feeling. For twenty years he had been blind of an eye, and now he told Omar that grief for his brother's cruel fate had brought floods of tears from that eye, which all these years had been bereft of moisture. 'Verily this surpasseth all other grief!' said Omar. 'Yes,' replied Motammim, 'it would have been a different thing if my brother had died the death of thy brother Zeid upon the field of battle.' The noble mien and generosity of Mâlik are painted in glowing colours. He used to kindle a great fire by his tent all night until the day broke, in the hope of attracting travellers to his hospitable home.

[2] The darker suspicion has been preserved by tradition, both in prose and verse. See *C. de Perceval*, vol. iii. p. 368; and *Kitâb al Aghâny*, vol. iii. p. 355. Leila, we are told, cast herself at Khâlid's feet, with hair dishevelled and unveiled face, imploring mercy for her husband. The wretched man, noticing the admiring look which the conqueror bestowed upon his wife, cried out, 'Alas, alas! here is the secret of my fate!' 'Not so,' said Khâlid, as he gave the sign for beheading him; 'but it is thine own apostasy.' All the same, he took the wife straightway for his own. We may dismiss the scene as unsupported by evidence. It is also inconsistent with Abu Bekr's treatment. His reproach of Khâlid was based not on the impropriety of the act itself (which he could hardly have avoided had the story been founded on fact), but on its being at variance with the ideas of the Arabs to wed on the field of battle. The example, however, was set by the Prophet himself, who married

Safia the night after the battle of Kheibar, and at any rate it was not long in becoming a common practice. Following the example of Khâlid (repeated by him again shortly after), the Moslem warriors made no delay in the field to wed—or rather, without wedding, to treat upon the spot as servile concubines—the wives and daughters of their fallen foes. The practice also now arose of taking their own families with them in the field, and marriages were celebrated there among themselves—on one occasion, we read, on the eve of an impending battle.

As to the tenor of tradition, there are two distinct versions of the tragedy, one giving as its cause the misconception of Khâlid's order, the other Mâlik's own disloyal speech. This last, taken separately, is inconsistent with the admitted fact that Khâlid justified himself before Abu Bekr by the former. In the text I have endeavoured to combine the two narratives.

Mâlik had flowing locks, and (so runs the tradition) when the skulls of the prisoners were cast into the fire under the cooking-pots, his alone would not burn because of the mass of hair. The story (true or false) shows the spirit of savagery rapidly fanned by religious war.

I should perhaps mention that, though tradition is proud of Khâlid's heroism, he is not a special favourite with Abbasside historians, as his son was afterwards a staunch supporter of the Omeyyads.

CHAPTER VII.

BATTLE OF YEMAMA.

END OF A.H. XI. BEGINNING OF 633 A.D.

Campaign of Khâlid against Moseilama. January, A.D. 633.[1]

BUT sterner work was in reserve for Khâlid. In the centre of Arabia, and right in front of his army, some marches east, lay Yemâma. There resided the Beni Hanîfa, a powerful branch of the great tribe Bekr ibn Wâil. Partly Christian and partly heathen, the Beni Hanîfa had submitted to Mahomet; but they were now in rebellion, 40,000 strong, around their prophet Moseilama. It was against these that Khâlid next directed his steps.

Moseilama's previous story.

The beginning of Moseilama's story belongs to the life of Mahomet.[2] Small in stature, and of a mean countenance, he had yet qualities which fitted him for command. He visited Medîna with a deputation from his people, and it was pretended that words had then fallen from Mahomet signifying that he would yet be a sharer with him in the prophetic office. Building thereon, Moseilama advanced his claim, and was accepted by his people as their prophet.

[1] *I.e.* Shawwâl, or two months before the close of A.H. XI. As already explained, the dates are arbitrarily assumed. The Kâtib Wâckidi places the battle of Yemâma in A.H. XII. (which begins March 18, A.D. 633), and even the engagement of Bozâkha in the same year; but this would throw the campaign in Irâc altogether too late. The *cold* which led Khâlid to order his prisoners to be 'wrapped,' must have been on the approach of winter, and corresponds with the chronology which I have been obliged to assume on grounds admittedly vague.

[2] See *Life of Mahomet*, ch. xxxii. *Moseilama* is a diminutive form of the adjective *Moslem*, and is supposed by some to be in that sense a derisive epithet. He is described as of a contemptible presence, a dark yellow complexion and a pug nose.

When summoned by Mahomet to abandon his impious pretensions, he sent an insolent answer claiming to divide the land. Mahomet replied in anger, and drove the ambassadors from his presence. To counteract his teaching, he deputed Rajjâl, a convert from the same tribe, who had visited Medîna, and there been instructed in the Corân.[1] On returning to his people, however, this man also was gained over by the pretender to espouse his claims as founded on the alleged admission of Mahomet himself. Moseilama, we are told, deceived the people by tricks and miracles; aped, in childish terms, the language of the Corân; and established a system of prayers similar to those of Mahomet. In short, his religion, so far as we can tell, was but a wretched imitation of Islam.[2] At the period we have now reached, he had just rid himself of Sajâh, the rival prophetess, by the singular expedient of taking her to wife, and then bribing her by half the revenues of Yemâma to return from whence she came. Parties of Mesopotamian horse were still about the country collecting her dues, when Khâlid's approach changed the scene; and Moseilama, marching out with a great army to meet him, pitched his camp at Acraba.

Ikrima and Shorahbîl were the commanders originally despatched by Abu Bekr to quell the rising at Yemâma,[3] and both suffered at the hands of Moseilama from a hasty and un- Ikrima suffers a reverse.

[1] Some say that he was deputed by Abu Bekr. He could recite the whole of Sura Becr (s. ii.). Khâlid had not heard of his defection, and looked for him to come out and join his army.

[2] The tales told of him are silly. He was desired to pray, as Mahomet had done, for rain, but it only intensified the drought; when he prayed for a blessing on young children, it made them stammer, become bald, &c. He established a sanctuary, perhaps in imitation of the Kâaba, but it became a mere rendezvous for bandits. See also the ascetic doctrines ascribed to him, and the opinion of Al Kindy, the Apologist, *supra*, pp. 23 & 32.

[3] Above, p. 18. Ikrima was the son of Abu Jahl, the arch-enemy, cursed in the Corân by Mahomet, and himself an inveterate opponent, until the taking of Mecca (*Life of Mahomet*, ch. xxiv.). So completely was it all forgotten now under the new dispensation of equality and brotherhood, that he had one of the chief commands given him.

guarded advance. Ikrima, anxious to anticipate his fellow, hurried forward, and was driven back with loss. The details (as generally the case when tradition deals with a defeat) are wanting; but the reverse was so serious that Abu Bekr, in reply to the despatch reporting it, wrote angrily to Ikrima. 'I will not see thy face,' he said, 'nor shalt thou see mine, as now thou art. Thou shalt not return hither to dishearten the people. Depart unto the uttermost coasts, and there join the armies in the east of the land, and then in the south.' So, skirting Yemâma, he went forward to Omân, there to retrieve his tarnished reputation. Shorahbîl, meanwhile, was directed to halt and await the approach of Khâlid.[1]

Khâlid sete out for Yemâma.

It was after the reverse of Ikrima that Khâlid, on being summoned to Medîna on the affair of Mâlik ibn Noweira, received the commission to attack Moseilama. In anticipation of serious opposition, the Caliph promised to strengthen his army by a fresh column composed of veterans from amongst the men of Mecca and Medîna. So Khâlid returned to his camp at Bitâh, and when these reinforcements came up, he marched in strength to meet the enemy. It was now that Shorahbîl, whose troop formed the vanguard, hastening forward like Ikrima, met with a like reverse, and was severely handled by Khâlid for his temerity.

Mojâa, a chief of the Beni Hanîfa, taken prisoner.

While yet a march from Acraba, Khâlid surprised a mounted body of the Beni Hanîfa under command of the chief Mojâa. They were returning from a raid against a neighbouring tribe, unaware of the approach of the Mussulman army. But they belonged to the enemy, and as such were all put to the sword, excepting Mojâa, whom Khâlid

[1] If Ikrima and Shorahbîl were despatched from Dzul Cassa at the general marshalling when Khâlid marched against Toleiha, then Shorahbîl must have had long to wait. But it is probable (as we have seen) that the popular tradition of the simultaneous despatch of all the columns is a fiction, and that Khâlid's expedition preceded some of the others by a considerable interval.

After finishing the Yemâma campaign, Shorahbîl's original orders were to join Amru in his proceedings against the Beni Codhâa in the north.

spared, as he said he promised to be useful on the coming eventful day, and kept chained in his tent under charge of Leila, his lately espoused wife.

Battle of Acraba or Yemâma.

On the morrow, the two armies met upon the saudy plain of Acraba. The enemy rushed on with desperate bravery. 'Fight for your loved ones!' cried the son of Moseilama; 'it is the day of jealousy and vengeance; if ye be worsted, your maidens will be ravished by the conqueror, and your wives dragged to his foul embrace!' So fierce was the shock that the Moslems were driven back, and their camp uncovered. The tent of Khâlid was entered by the wild Bedouins; and, but for the chivalry of her captive, who conjured his countrymen to spare a lady of such noble birth, Leila would have perished by their swords. 'Go, fight against men,' Mojâa cried, 'and leave this woman;' so they cut the tent-ropes and departed. There was danger for Islam at the moment. Defeat would have been disastrous; indeed, the Faith could hardly have survived it. But now the spirit of the Moslems was aroused. Khâlid, knowing the rivalry between the Bedouin and the city Arabs, separated them to fight apart. On this they rallied one the other; and the sons of the desert cried: 'Now we shall see the carnage wax hot amongst the raw levies of the town. We will teach them how to fight!' Prodigies of valour were fought all round. The heroic words and deeds of the leaders, as one after another fell in the thick of battle, are dwelt on by the historian with enthusiasm. Zeid, the favourite brother of Omar, who led the men of Mecca, singled out Rajjâl, and, reproaching his apostasy, despatched him forthwith. A furious south wind, charged with the desert sand, blew into the faces of the Moslems, and, blinding them, caused a momentary pause. Upbraiding them for their slackness, Zeid cried out: 'I shall follow them that have gone before; not a word will I utter more, till we beat the apostates back, or I appear to clear myself before my Lord.

Close your eyes and clench your teeth. Forward like men!' So saying, he led the charge and fell. Abu Hodzeifa, another Companion of note, calling out 'Fight for the Corân, ye Moslems, and adorn it by your deeds!' followed his example and shared his fate. Seeing this, Abu Hodzeifa's freedman, Sâlim, seized the banner from his dying master, and exclaiming, 'I were a craven bearer of the Corân if I feared for my life,' plunged into the battle and was slain.[1] Nor were the citizens of Medîna behind their fellows. Their commander, Thâbit ibn Cays, reproached them indignantly: 'Woe be to you,' he said, 'because of this backsliding. Verily, I am clear of ye, even as I am clear of these,' and he pointed to the enemy as he flung himself and perished in their midst. Animated thus, the rank and file charged furiously. Backwards and forwards swayed the line, and heavy was the carnage. But urged by Khâlid's valiant arm,[2] and raising the grand battle-cry '*Yâ Mohammedâ!*' the Moslem arms at length prevailed. The enemy broke and began to give. 'To the garden!' cried Mohakkem, a brave leader of the Beni Hanîfa; 'to the garden, and close the gate!' Taking his stand, he guarded their retreat as they fled into an orchard surrounded by a strong wall, and Moseilama with them. The Moslem troops, following close,

[1] From the expression used, it would almost seem as if Sâlim carried the Corân on the point of his flag-staff. This was a common practice in after times, but the Corân was not yet collected. Possibly some portion may have been thus borne aloft by the leader, or the words may be metaphorical or anticipative.

[2] In some accounts of the battle, Khâlid is spoken of as challenging his enemy to single combat, and slaying, one after another, all who came out against him. But the circumstances would hardly have admitted of this. These single combats are the conventional drapery of all the early battles, and need not always be taken as facts. Here they are specially introduced to give place to an apocryphal story about Moseilama. He came forth to answer the challenge of Khâlid, who, in reference to the offer made by him to Mahomet, ironically asked whether he was now prepared 'to share the Kingdom'; whereupon Moseilama turned aside 'to consult his dæmon.' Khâlid then rushed at him, and he fled. 'Where is that now which thou didst promise us?' cried his followers to the prophet, but all that he could reply was to bid them fight for their honour and their families.

soon swarmed all round the wall, but found no entrance anywhere. At last Berâa, one of the Twelve,[1] cried, 'Lift me aloft upon the wall.' So they lifted him up. For a moment, as he looked on the surging mass below, the hero hesitated; then, boldly leaping down, he beat right and left, until he reached the gate, and threw it open. Like waters pent up, his comrades rushed in; and, as beasts of the forest snared in a trap, so wildly struggled the brave Beni Hanîfa in *the Garden of Death*. Hemmed in by the narrow space, and hampered by the trees, their arms useless from their very numbers, they were hewn down, and perished to a man. The carnage was fearful, for besides the slain within the walls, an equal number were killed on the field, and again an equal number in the flight.[2] The Moslems, too, despite their splendid victory, had cause to remember the Garden of Death and the battle of Yemâma, for their loss was beyond all previous experience. Besides those killed hand to hand in the garden, great numbers fell in the battle when their ranks wavered and gave way. The Refugees from Mecca lost 360 men, and the Citizens of Medîna 300, or nearly 700 in all; while the slaughter amongst the Bedouins, though somewhat less, raised the gross number over 1,200, besides the wounded. And amongst them were nine and thirty chief 'Companions,' or men of note, amongst the Prophet's followers. At Medîna there was hardly a house, whether of Refugees or native Citizens, in which the voice of wailing was not heard.[3]

The Garden of Death.

The Beni Henifa discomfited, with great slaughter on both sides.

Moseilama was slain by Wahshi, the same negro warrior who, swinging a javelin, after his savage style of warfare,

Moseilama among the slain.

[1] The twelve *Leaders* at the Pledge of Acaba. *Life of Mahomet*, ch. vi.

[2] It is said that 7,000 of the enemy were slain on each of these occasions, but the statement is loose and, no doubt, vastly exaggerated. One tradition gives the slain in the garden alone at 10,000.

[3] The greater loss among the men of Mecca and Medîna was ascribed by themselves to their superior gallantry, but by the Bedouins to their being raw and unused to fighting. We see already the seed of the rivalry which afterwards broke out so fatally between the Bedouins and the Coreish.

round his head, had on the field of Ohod brought the sainted Hamza to the ground. After the battle Khâlid carried the chief Mojâa, still in chains, over the field to identify the dead. As they passed along the field of battle, turning the bodies over one after another, they came upon a stalwart figure. 'Look, was this your master?' said Khâlid. 'Nay,' replied Mojâa, 'this was a nobler and a better man.' It was the corpse of the brave Mohakkem, who fell covering the retreat, slain by the hand of Abdul Rahman, the Caliph's son. Then they entered the Garden of Death. Among the heaps of the mangled dead, they stumbled on a body of insignificant mien. 'This is your man,' said Mojâa, as he turned it on its side; 'truly ye have done for him!' 'Yea,' replied Khâlid, 'or rather it is he which hath done for you, that which he hath done.'

Truce with the Beni Hanîfa.

The Mussulman horse now scoured the country, and every day brought in bands of prisoners. Aware that after their crushing defeat his people were incapable of resistance, Mojâa bethought him of a stratagem. He represented them as holding their forts and fastnesses in force throughout the country, and so persuaded Khâlid to offer them their lives if they at once capitulated. Meanwhile, by his secret suggestion, the battlements were lined by every available person, even by the old men and women in armed disguise; and Khâlid's messengers returned with the answer that they would fight to the last. The army was wearied with the hard struggle, and most of them anxious, after the long campaign, to return to their homes; and so Khâlid concluded a truce, on terms more favourable than they would have obtained but for Mojâa's artifice. When it came to light, Khâlid reproached him for it; but in the end excused him on the pleaded ground of patriotism, and stood by the treaty. No sooner was it concluded, than he received a despatch of unwonted severity from Abu Bekr, who, to strike terror into other apostate tribes, commanded that not a single adult

male of the ungodly and rebellious race should be spared. Fortunately the truce forbade the bloody edict. The Beni Hanîfa, like other prostrate tribes, were received back into the bosom of Islam, and a portion only of their number were retained in captivity.[1]

Deputation of Beni Hanîfa to the Caliph.

When the campaign was ended, Khâlid sent a deputation of the chief survivors to Abu Bekr, who received them courteously. 'Out upon you!' said he; 'how is it that this impostor led you all astray?' 'O Caliph!' they answered, 'thou hast heard it all; he was one whom the Lord blessed not, nor yet his people;' and they repeated to him some of the things he used to say. 'Good heavens!' exclaimed Abu Bekr, 'Beshrew you! What kind of words are these? There is neither sense in them for good nor yet for evil, to have beguiled you thus, but a kind of strange fatuity.' So he dismissed them to their homes.[2]

Many 'Companions' among the slain. Zeid, brother of Omar.

Among the killed we meet not a few names familiar to us in the annals of the Prophet's life. The carnage amongst the *Readers*—those who had the Corân by heart—was so great, as to suggest to Omar the first design of collecting the sacred text, 'lest any part should be lost therefrom.' At the death of his favourite brother Zeid, who had shared with him the dangers of the first battles of Islam, Omar was inconsolable. 'Thou art returned home,' he said to his son

[1] The terms of the treaty, notwithstanding the alleged artifice (which reads somewhat strangely) were sufficiently severe. The Beni Hanîfa agreed to give up all their armour, their silver and their gold; but they were allowed to retain half of their slaves, and get back half of their own people taken prisoner. Khâlid had already captured in the valleys and open villages so many prisoners, that he had sent 500 to Abu Bekr as the royal Fifth, implying a total number of 2,500. But Omar subsequently freed all slaves of Arab blood.

Selma, one of the Hanîfa chiefs, sought to dissuade his people from surrender, saying that the winter was not overpast, and that the enemy must retire. Being overruled, he fled and committed suicide.

[2] The sayings reported were such as these: 'O croaking frog, thou neither preventest the drinker, nor yet defilest the water.' 'We shall have half the land and ye the other half; the Coreieh are an overbearing folk.' But as I have said before, we have not the materials for knowing what the real teaching of Moseilama was, nor the secret of his influence.

Abdallah, 'safe and sound; and Zeid is dead. Wherefore wast not thou slain before him? I wish not to see thy face.' 'Father!' answered Abdallah, 'he asked for martyrdom, and the Lord granted it. I strove after the same, but it was not given unto me.' Such was the spirit of these Moslem warriors.

Khâlid marries Mojâa's daughter.

Khâlid again signalised his victory by wedding a captive maid upon the field. 'Give me thy daughter to wife,' he said to Mojâa, the prisoner who had so faithfully defended his bride in the hour of peril. 'Wait,' replied Mojâa; 'be not so hasty. Thou wilt endamage thyself in the eyes of thy Chief, and me likewise.' 'Man, give me thy daughter!' he repeated imperiously; so Mojâa gave her to him. When Abu Bekr heard of it, he wrote him a letter sprinkled with blood. 'By my life! thou son of Khâlid's father, thou art a pretty fellow, living thus at thine ease. Thou weddest a damsel, whilst the ground beneath the nuptial couch is yet wet with the blood of twelve hundred!' The reproof fell lightly upon Khâlid. 'This is the work,' he said, as he read the epistle, 'of that left-handed fellow,' meaning Omar. The sentiment, however, was Abu Bekr's own; but the 'Sword of the Lord' could not be spared.

We shall meet Khâlid next in Chaldæa, by the banks of the river Euphrates.

[1] The Persian paraphrase of Tabari gives a highly coloured version. Khâlid, it tells us, gave his bride the dower of a million pieces out of the spoil, while on the marriage night the Moslem warriors lay about hungry and in want. Verses handed about the camp to this effect reached Omar, and put him in a towering passion. He nearly persuaded Abu Bekr to recall Khâlid, but the Caliph, reflecting that, after so great a victory, it would discourage the army, contented himself with a reproachful letter. All this is evidently gross exaggeration, founded probably on the dislike of the Abbasside historians.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE REBELS IN THE EAST AND SOUTH OF ARABIA.

A.H. XI. A.D. 632-3.

Campaigns in the east and south of Arabia. A.H. XI.

HAVING traced Khâlid's victorious career from the north to the centre of Arabia, we shall now follow the Mussulman arms in their progress from Bahrein and Omân on the Persian Gulf, along the southern coast to Hadhramaut and Yemen, but more briefly than before, both because the authorities themselves are brief, and also because the interest of the story, apart from a few instructive incidents, centres mainly in the general result, that is, the reclamation of apostate Arabia.

Bahrein invaded by Alâ. A.H. XI. A.D. 633.

Beyond Yemâma, skirting the western shore of the Persian Gulf from Catîf to Omân, lies the long tract, desert and littoral, called Hejer and Bahrein. It was chiefly occupied by the Beni Bekr, and other branches of the great Beni Rabia family. Mondzir, the Christian chief of Bahrein, had adopted Islam, and, in acknowledgment of the Prophet's suzerainty, entertained a Resident from Medîna at his court.[1] He died shortly after Mahomet, and then the whole province rebelled. One tribe alone was kept loyal by Jarûd, a disciple tanght at the feet of the Prophet, who now preached that, though Mahomet had gone the way of all the prophets, Islam would not the less survive. Alâ, the Resident, who had fled upon the outbreak, was reappointed by the Caliph, and despatched with a force to reclaim the rebellious pro-

[1] See the previous history of the province, *Life of Mahomet*, ch. xxx.

vince. This was after the brilliant campaign of Khâlid, and the country was sufficiently near the scene of his operations to feel its influence. As he passed along the outskirts of Yemâma, the Beni Hanîfa, Temîm, and other tribes, anxious to prove their loyalty, sent contingents to join the column.[2] Thus reinforced to double his original numbers, Alâ attempted to cross the waterless zone of Dahna, lying between him and the Gulf. The army lost its way, and was overtaken by darkness in the very midst of the wilderness; the water was all spent, no springs were known of, and they resigned themselves to despair. With the sun would arise a scorching heat, and they would all perish of thirst. But, in answer to their earnest cries and supplications, as morning broke, water suddenly appeared shining on the horizon. They hastened forward, and found it to be a lake. Watering their camels and horses therefrom, they drank themselves abundantly, and went on their journey joyfully. The marvel is, in the believers' eyes, the more extraordinary, as no spring had ever been seen in the wilderness of Dahna before, nor after the most diligent search has the miraculous lake ever been found again.[3]

The miraculous lake.

[1] The mission of Alâ must have been considerably later than that of Khâlid. We have before seen reason to believe that the various expeditions were not, as tradition represents, despatched all at once from Dzul Cassa.

[2] The Beni Hanîfa, Moseilama's tribe, was a branch of the same Beni Bekr ibn Wâil, mentioned in the text, as also the Beni Temîm, who to this day (such is the tenacity with which the Bedouins hold to their native soil) occupy the same pasture-lands. Some details are given regarding the chiefs who had remained tolerably loyal throughout. Thus Cays ibn Asim, Zibricân, &c., who at first vacillated, though they kept aloof from Sajâh, now, as Alâ drew near, came forth with the tithes which during the anarchy had been kept in deposit, and fought upon his side.

We are also told of a staunch believer, Thomâma, who was able to maintain his loyalty with a party of his tribe, until Alâ appeared. He joined the force, but came to an untimely and ignominious end. He was presented for his bravery with the spoils taken from the person of Hotem (to be noticed below), and, wearing them on a journey, was set upon by the people as Hotem's murderer and as such put to death.

[3] This is the solitary expedition since the death of Mahomet around which tradition has gathered a halo of marvellous tales. When they halted on that

Bahrein reduced.

The rebellion in *Bahrein* had by this time assumed formidable dimensions. Hotem, a powerful chief, had gathered around him not only the backsliding tribes, but also the mixed races of Persian and Indian parentage, who abounded on the shores of the Gulf;[1] and they had fixed upon a scion of the house of Hîra as their king. The faithful remnant under Jarûd, blockaded by the rebels, were nearly succumbing to hunger, when, to their relief, Alâ appeared. For offensive operations, however, against so great a host, the Moslem force was still too weak. To guard their position, they dug a deep trench in front, and for a whole month contented themselves with single combats and indecisive skirmishing. At last, one night, finding the enemy disordered and overcome with wine, they made an attack from all sides, put them to flight, and killing Hotem, took the prince of Hîra prisoner.[2]

Miraculous descent on the island of Dârîn.

The discomfited force fled, and, taking ship, found refuge in Dârîn, one of the numerous islets a little way off from the mainland, and the seat of a Nestorian bishopric.[3] Thither they were pursued by Alâ, and here again we are told of a miraculous interposition. No boats or means of trans-

miserable night, the beasts of burden all ran off wildly with their loads. Not one was left, and the army was near perishing of hunger as well as thirst. In the morning, they returned from all directions with their burdens, of their own accord. The lake is likened to the water that flowed from the rock in the wilderness when struck by Moses.

[1] Called *Ebnâa*. The traders from India settled (as they do now) along the coast from the Euphrates to Aden, and so a mongrel race sprang up.

[2] He bore the dynastic name of Mundzir, and, having been freed at the instance of an Arab relative, embraced Islam. He had the surname of *Gharur* (deceiver), but said that he ought rather to have been called *Maghrûr* (deceived). The relations of these tribes on the N.E. of Arabia, with Hîra and also with Persia, were close and constant. Little more than twenty years before, the Beni Bekr had beaten back the combined forces of Persia and Hîra. The connection of the Arab tribes in this quarter with Persia corresponded with that between the Syrian tribes and the Roman empire. (*Life of Mahomet*, vol. i. p. clxxxii.)

[3] For the island Dârîn (or Dirîn) see an interesting article by Sir H. Rawlinson, on the islands of Bahrein, *Royal As. Society's Journal*, vol. xii. p. 222, *et seq.* There were *five* bishops in this province, and 'the insular see is always named Dirîn.' We have here indirect evidence of the prevalence of the Christian faith in northern Arabia, far down the shores of the Persian Gulf.

port were anywhere at hand. Raising, therefore, a wild invocation to the Lord of Hosts for help, the Moslems rushed into the sea and crossed the strait as it had been a shallow sandy beach. The enemy, taken by surprise on their island, were put utterly to the sword, so that not one escaped to tell the tale. A pious bard has likened the passage to that of the Israelites through the Red Sea, and a monk is said to have been converted by the double miracle of waters breaking out in the wilderness, and waters drying up in the channel of the great deep. The spoil was prodigious,[1] and multitudes of women and children were taken captive.

Bahrein reclaimed by Alâ.

While thus engaged, Alâ received material help from loyal followers along the coast. They secured the wavering, protected the rear from surprise, and overawed unruly tribes ever ready for plunder and rapine. Thus the whole region of Hejer, reclaimed to the faith, fell peaceably under the government of Alâ.[2] Amongst those who aided in this work

Mothanna.

was Mothanna, a chief of great influence over the Bekr clans, from one of which he sprang.[3] Following up the victory of Alâ along the coast, this warrior in his progress northward reached at last the delta of the Euphrates, where he inaugurated a movement that was of lasting importance and which will shortly engage our attention.

The campaign of *Omân* followed close upon that of

[1] Each horseman got 6,000 pieces. The tale is told with such extravagances as we are accustomed to only in the life of the Prophet, *e.g.* the strait was so broad that it took a day and a night for a ship to cross, yet not the hoof of a camel was wetted. It is remarkable that, with few exceptions, this expedition is the only one, after the death of Mahomet, regarding which such childish tales are told.

[2] There is a tradition that two chiefs Zibricân and Acra obtained from Abu Bekr a patent appointing them collectors of tithe in Bahrein, on condition that they made themselves responsible for its loyalty. The document was shown to Omar, who, angry apparently because Acra had been an apostate, tore it up. Talha, who had negotiated the affair, went to Abu Bekr and asked, 'Art thou ruler, or is Omar?' 'Omar,' he replied, 'but obedience is due to me.' This (which illustrates the great influence of Omar with the Caliph) may have referred to a part of the Bahrein coast not under Alâ.

[3] He belonged to the Beni Shaybân, a sub-tribe of the Beni Bekr.

Bahrein.[1] Jeyfar, Prince of Omân, had a year or two before tendered his allegiance to Mahomet. Amru was thereupon deputed to be the Prophet's Representative at his court, and the demand of tithes from this distant province was foregone, on condition that they were distributed among the local poor.[2] Notwithstanding this concession, Mahomet was no sooner dead than the whole province revolted. The rebellion was led by one Lackît, who, to swell his influence, claimed himself to be a prophet. Jeyfar fled to the mountains and Amru to Medîna. The task of reclaiming Omân and the adjoining province of Mâhra was committed by Abu Bekr to Hodzeifa and Arfaja, two converts of influence in those parts.[3] They were assisted by Ikrima, son of Abu Jahl, who (as we have seen) was bidden by Abu Bekr to retrieve his reputation in this distant quarter. Arrived in Omân, they effected a junction with Jeyfar, and were then sufficiently strong to re-occupy Sohâr.[4] An engagement followed at Dabâ. Here the Moslems, hard pressed, were near to suffering defeat, when, at the critical moment, a great body of Abd al Cays and other tribes recently reclaimed in Bahrein appeared on the field and turned the battle in their favour. The slaughter amongst the enemy was great, and their families, which they had placed in the rear to nerve their courage, fell a welcome prize into the believers' hands. The mart of Dabâ, enriched by Indian merchandise, yielded a magnificent booty, and Arfaja was at once deputed to Medîna with the royal Fifth of slaves and plunder.

Omân reconquered by Hodzeifa.

Battle of Dabâ.

Hodzeifa was left behind as governor of Omân. Ikrima, having reached the easternmost point of Arabia, turning now

Ikrima reduces Mâhra.

[1] No dates are given. But as the battle which follows was retrieved by reinforcements from the Beni Abd al Cays, and as that tribe was only set free by the success of Alâ, the operations in Omân must necessarily have been later than those in Bahrein.

[2] See *Life of Mahomet*, ch. xxx.

[3] They belonged to the great families of Azd and Himyar, who inhabited that part of the Peninsula, and had therefore both experience and local influence.

[4] Sohâr, still a mercantile port, lies above 100 miles west of Maskat. The bazaar of Dabâ was probably near to it.

to the south-west, pursued his victorious course to *Mâhra*. His army was swelled not only by the Bahrein contingent but by fresh levies, attracted by his success, from the tribes upon his march. Mâhra was distracted at this moment by the quarrel of two rival chiefs. Espousing the cause of the weakest, who at once avowed the faith, Ikrima attacked the other and achieved a great victory. Among the spoil were 2,000 Bactrian camels and a vast supply of arms and beasts of burden. This quarter of the peninsula, including the islands along the coast, was soon completely pacified. After some time spent here in the re-establishment of order, Ikrima, with an army now of overwhelming strength, advanced, as he had been instructed, to join Mohâjir in the campaign against Hadhramaut and Yemen. But before proceeding further, we must take a brief retrospect of things in the south and west of the peninsula.

Order restored in the Hejâz, Tihâma, and south-west coast.

The commotion in that quarter caused by the rebellion of Aswad, the 'Veiled Prophet,' had hardly subsided, when the death of Mahomet threw the land into a worse confusion. Mecca and Tâyif, after the first excitement, remained tolerably secure under their governors, the youthful Attâb[1] and Othmân ibn al Aâs. But in the *Tihâma* (coast washed by the Red Sea), as well as in the interior, misrule and violence were rife. A party of marauders from amongst the Beni Khozâa and other lawless Bedouins round about the Holy City, ready as ever for plunder and rapine, were dispersed with great slaughter by the levies of Attâb. Order was maintained by a body of 500 men quartered within the sacred limits, and by small pickets throughout the districts of Mecca and Tâyif. But between them and Yemen there was nothing

[1] Attâb had been governor ever since Mahomet appointed him on the capture of Mecca. The rebels were headed by Jondob of the Mudlij tribe. Penitential verses, recited by this rebel chief on his submission, have been preserved (*Tabari*, i. p. 212). In the paucity of trustworthy tradition at this period, such verses are peculiarly valuable, amplifying as they do the meagre materials at our command, and giving fixed and certain points.

save turmoil and alarm. Troops of bandit horse, remnants of the false prophet's army, hovered about the country to the south and west of Najrân. They were headed by Amr ibn Mádekerib, a poet of note and a chief of great local influence, before whom Khâlid ibn Saîd, the governor of Najrân, fled for his life. On one occasion, however, Khâlid, with but a small following, surprised Amr and spoiled him of his horse and the sword *Samsât*, inherited from Himyar kings and famous in Arab song.[1] The whole coast was in a ferment, and the loyal adherents of Islam were fain to flee for shelter to fastnesses in the mountains. Bands of the Beni Azd, occupying the uplands, approached the sacred territory in threatening attitude, but were dispersed by the governor of Tâyif. The whole Tihâma was overrun by swarming bands of the Akk and Ashâr tribes, who closed the roads and barred communications with the south. Tâhir, who had been placed by Mahomet over these tribes, was now commissioned with a force to rally the faithful remnant on the spot, and to clear the country of the robbers infesting it. This he did so effectually that the roads became again impassable, but now simply from the offensive multitude of carcases strewn upon them.[2]

In *Yemen* peace was not so easily restored. The false

[1] According to another account of this affair, Khâlid (who had been appointed by Mahomet collector of tithes and resident with the Beni Zobeid in the quarter south of Mecca), attacked Amr ibn Mádekerib, and having taken his sister prisoner, obtained the sword as her ransom. The sword came several years afterwards into the possession of the Governor of Kûfa, who offered to give it back to Amr; to show its marvellous temper, Amr took it, and at one blow severed the pack on his mule's back in two. Then he returned it to the governor, saying that he could not retain a sword of which he had once been despoiled. Among other poetry is some by Amr himself:—'The sword of the son of Dzu Cayfar (A.D. 475) was mine; its blade was tempered in the age of Ad. It hath a grooved blade which cleaveth helmets, and the bodies of men, in twain.' See *Caussin de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 117; also Mr. C. J. Lyall's translations from the Hamasah. *Journal As. Soc. of Bengal*, 1877, vol. xlvi. pp. 179, *et seq.* It is curious to remark how many Arab warriors were also poets of renown.

[2] The tradition was preserved in the name of 'the *Villains'* (*Akhabith*) road,' by which this part of the coast was long known.

Confusion in Yemen following the assassination of Aswad.

prophet Aswad (it will be recollected) was assassinated by three of his courtiers, who, at the bidding of Mahomet, conspired with his wife against him.[1] These were the Arab chief Cays ibn Abd Yaghûth, commander of his army, and the two ministers, of Persian descent, Feroze and Dâdweih, who thereupon succeeded to the government at Sanâa.[2] When tidings of these events reached Medîna just after Mahomet's death, Abu Bekr appointed Feroze to be his lieutenant, with Cays aud Dâdweih to help him. The Arab blood of Cays rebelled against serving under a foreigner, and he plotted to expel the whole Persian race. The princes of Himyar, however, Dzul Kelâa and others,[3] would not help him, and he was obliged to call in the aid of the brigand Amr ibn Mâdekerib and his marauding bands. Dâdweih was treacherously slain by Amr at a feast, but Feroze escaped, and after much hardship, secured his retreat with a friendly tribe in the hills of Khaulân. For a time Cays carried all before him. The family of Feroze was taken captive, and the Persian settlers, pursued in every direction, fled to the mountains, or took ship from Aden. Feroze appealed for help to the Caliph; but it was long before he had any troops to send. So Feroze cast about for himself, and at length, by the aid of some loyal tribes, put the troops of Cays to flight, regained possession of his family and reoccupied Sanâa.[4]

[1] *Life of Mahomet*, chap. xxxii.

[2] Yemen was, for a considerable period in the seventh century, governed by a Satrap as a dependency of Persia; and large numbers of Persians then settled in the country. These were their descendants, and also the *Ebnâa* of mixed parentage. (*Life of Mahomet*, vol. i., p. exliv.)

[3] Dzul Kelâa and other semi-independent Himyar chiefs occupying the neighbouring districts. Some of these remained loyal, and distinguished themselves greatly in the Syrian campaigns.

[4] Feroze was a poet, as well as a statesman; and his verses lamenting the captivity of his family, and threatening revenge, have been preserved. (*Tabari*, i. p. 220.) Abd *Yaghûth*, or servant of the idol of that name worshipped in the south of Arabia. See Lyall's translations from the Hamasah, quoted above. We hear of him afterwards, but not much of Feroze.

But more effectual help to quell the disordered country was soon at hand. On one side, Mohâjir was marching from the north. Appointed by the Prophet his lieutenant in Hadhramaut, he had long been detained by sickness at Medîna, and perhaps also by the inability of the Caliph to furnish him with a following. He was the last of the commanders sent forth by Abu Bekr to reclaim the backsliding tribes. Passing through Tâyif and Najrân, as late, probably, as ten or twelve months after the death of Mahomet,[1] he was joined on the way by various loyal tribes, and thus approached the disturbed country at the head of a substantial force. On the other side, Ikrima, with his great and ever-growing army, was advancing from the east. Hastening to meet Mohâjir, he, for the present, left Hadhramaut on his right, and passed rapidly on to Aden. Alarmed at the gathering storm, Cays ibn Abd Yaghûth and Amr ibn Mâdekerib had joined their forces to oppose Mohâjir. But soon quarrelling, they parted, and, according to the wont of Arab poets, abused each other in insulting verse.[2] Amr, perceiving opposition to be now in vain, sought, by a strange

Mohâjir marches from Medîna upon Yemen. End of A.H. XI. Spring, A.D. 633.

[1] As usual, no date is given. But as only now he met Ikrima, who had made a march of several weeks from Omân, after the campaign in the East, the period must have been late in the year A.H. XI., if not the beginning of A.H. XII. Tabari, as I have said before, places the entire reduction of apostate Arabia within A.H. XI.

Mohâjir was brother to Omm Salma, one of the Prophet's wives. He was one of the malingerers who absented himself from the Tebûk campaign, and so incurred the displeasure of Mahomet. (*Life of Mahomet*, chap. xxviii.) But Omm Salma, one day, washing the Prophet's head, made mention to him of her brother, and, finding the opportunity favourable, called him in. His excuse was accepted; and the government of Hadhramaut was then and there conferred on him.

[2] The verses are quoted by Tabari, vol. i. p. 224. The Arabs, and especially their poets, had the faculty of abusing one another in the grossest manner. About the same time, lampoons were bandied between Amr ibn Mâdekerib and Farwa, a loyal chief of the Beni Murâd, who maintained a constant check upon Amr's proceedings. As regards Farwa, we are told that when he first presented himself to Mahomet, he explained how his tribe and the Beni Hamdân had an idol which each kept alternately for a year. The contested possession of this idol led in bygone time to the famous battle of Al Razm.

expedient, to gain his safety. He made a night attack upon Cays, and carried him prisoner to Mohâjir; but he had forgotten a safe-conduct for himself. Mohâjir, therefore, seized them both, and sent them in chains to Medîna. The Caliph was at first minded to put Amr to death because of the murder of Dâdweih; but he denied the crime, and there was no evidence to prove it. 'Art thou not ashamed,' said Abu Bekr to him, 'that following the rebel cause, thou art ever either a fugitive or in bonds? Hadst thou been a defender of the Faith instead, then had the Lord raised thee above thy fellows.' 'So assuredly it is,' replied the humbled chief; 'I will embrace the faith, and never again will I desert it.' So the Caliph forgave them both; and his clemency was not abused, for we find these gallant but unscrupulous chiefs soon after fighting loyally in the Persian war.

Peace restored in Yemen.

After this, Yemen was speedily reduced to order. The rebel horse, remnant of the false prophet's army, was pursued without quarter, and soon exterminated. And Mohâjir, established firmly at Sanâa, ruled in security over the whole of that country, from Najrân to Aden.

Rebellion in Hadhramaut under Asháth ibn Cays.

Mohâjir and Ikrima were now at leisure to turn their arms against *Hadhramaut*, the great province which occupies the south of Arabia, east of Yemen. There Ziâd, who held Mohâjir's government during his protracted absence, was hard pressed. He had, at an early period, aroused the hatred of the Beni Kinda by harshness in collecting the tithe; but, supported by the Sakûn, and other tribes hostile to the Beni Kinda, he had obtained several important advantages over them.[1] On one occasion he carried off, with great spoil, the families of a vanquished tribe. Asháth ibn Cays, chief of the Kinda, was moved by their

[1] The Beni Sakûn were loyal throughout the rebellion, and gave protection to the faithful refugees from other tribes. Among others, Moâdz ibn Jabal, deputed by Mahomet to teach the tribes of the south the Corân and the tenets

cries; and, having gathered a strong force, fell upon Ziâd, and rescued the captives. It is the same Asháth who, when he tendered his homage to Mahomet, had betrothed to himself the sister of Abu Bekr.[1] Thus compromised he went into active rebellion, and roused the whole country against Ziâd, who, surrounded by the enemy, despatched an urgent summons to Mohâjir to hasten to his deliverance.

Subdued by Mohâjir and Ikrima.

By this time Mohâjir and Ikrima, marching respectively from Sanâa and Aden, had effected a junction at Mâreb, and were crossing the sandy desert of Sayhad, which lay between them and Hadhramaut. Learning the critical position of Ziâd, Mohâjir set off in haste with a flying squadron, and, joined by Ziâd, fell upon Asháth, and discomfited him with great slaughter. The routed enemy fled for refuge to the stronghold of Nojeir, which Mohâjir immediately invested. Ikrima soon came up with the main body, when there were troops enough both to surround the city and also to ravage all the country round about, Stung by witnessing the ruin of their kindred, and preferring death to dishonour, the garrison sallied forth, and fought the Moslems at every point about the fortress. After a desperate struggle, in which the approaches were filled with the dead, they were driven back. Meanwhile Abu Bekr, apprised of the obstinate resistance, sent orders to make an example of the rebels, and give no quarter. The wretched garrison, with the enemy daily increasing, and no prospect of relief, were now bereft of hope. Seeing the position desperate, the wily Asháth made his way to Ikrima and treacherously agreed to deliver up

of Islam (*Life of Mahomet*, chap. xxx.), took refuge with them, and married a lady from amongst them. He was so enamoured of this Sakûnite wife that it used to be his constant prayer that in the resurrection he and she might both be raised together. He died in the plague A.H. XVIII.

[1] See the account of their brilliant cavalcade and the betrothal, *Life of Mahomet*, chap. xxx

Asháth sent prisoner to Medîna and released by Abu Bekr.

the fortress if nine lives were guaranteed. The Moslems entered, slew the fighting men, and took the women captive. The list of the nine to be spared was presented to Mohâjir. 'Thy name is not here!' cried the conqueror, exultingly, to Asháth; for the craven traitor had forgotten, in the excitement of the moment, to enter his own name; —'the Lord be praised, who hath condemned thee out of thine own mouth.' So, having cast him into chains, he was about to order his execution, when Ikrima interposed and induced him, much against his will, to refer the cause to Abu Bekr. The crowd of captive women, mourning the massacre of their sons and husbands, loaded the recreant as he passed by with bitter imprecations.[1] Arrived at Medîna, the Caliph abused him as a pusillanimous wretch who had neither the power to lead, nor yet the courage to defend, his people; and he threatened him with death. But at last, moved by his appeal to the terms agreed upon by Ikrima, and by his protestations that he would thenceforth fight bravely for the faith, Abu Bekr not only forgave him, but allowed him to fulfil the marriage with his sister.[2] Asháth remained for a while in idleness at Medîna, and the Caliph was heard to say that one of the three things that he repented having done during his Caliphate was his weakness in sparing this rebel's life. But afterwards Asháth went to the wars in Syria and Irâc, and there redeemed his name.

Authority re-established in the south.

By these operations the rebellion in the south was crushed, and the reign of Islam completely re-established. Mohâjir elected to remain in Yemen, where he shared the government with Feroze. Ziâd continued to administer Hadhramaut.

A curious story is told of a lady whom Ikrima married

[1] A thousand women were captured in the fortress. They called after Asháth as he passed, 'he smelleth of burning,' i.e. he is a recreant traitor.

[2] Her name was Omm Farwa. Their son Mohammed was killed fighting in the army of Musáb against Mokhtár. Some verses by Asháth lamenting the catastrophe of Nojeir have been preserved by Tabari, vol. i. p. 248.

at Aden, and carried with him into his camp. She had been betrothed to Mahomet, but the marriage had never been consummated. The soldiers murmured, and questioned the propriety of Ikrima's marriage. Mohâjir referred the matter to Abu Bekr, who decided that there was nothing wrong in the proceeding, as Mahomet had never fulfilled his contract with the betrothed damsel.[1]

Ikrima marries a lady who had been betrothed to Mahomet.

I should not here omit to mention the fate of two song-stresses in Yemen, who were accused, one of satirising the Prophet, the other of ridiculing the Moslems, in their songs. Mohâjir had the hands of both cut off, and also (to stay their singing for the future) their front teeth pulled out. The Caliph, on hearing of it, approved the punishment of the first; for, said he: 'Crime against a prophet is not as crime against a common man; and, indeed, had the case been first referred to me, I should, as a warning to others, have directed her execution.' But he disapproved the mutilation of the other.

Two song-stresses mutilated for profane singing.

[1] She was the daughter of one Nomân, who, praising her attractions to Mahomet, added, as the climax, that she never had had sickness of any kind. After a private interview with her, Mahomet sent her back to her home in the south, saying, 'Had the Lord seen anything good in her, it had not been thus.'

In the *Life of Mahomet*, I rejected as apocryphal this and other accounts of the Prophet's betrothal to certain females with whom marriage was not consummated. In the present case, however, the betrothal is certainly confirmed by the curious objection taken by the army to Ikrima's marriage on account of the inchoate relation in which she at one time stood to the Prophet; and it is therefore possible that other betrothals which at the time appeared to me improbable may also be founded on fact. See *Life of Mahomet*, chap. xxii., and Ibu Cotâba, p. 18.

It will be remembered that the widows of the Prophet, as 'Mothers of the Faithful,' were prohibited by the Corân from re-marrying. *Ibid.* p. 303.

CHAPTER IX.

ENROLMENT OF THE BEDOUIN TRIBES FOR WAR BEYOND ARABIA.

Opposition beaten down in Arabia.

WITH the campaign in Hadhramaut, opposition in Arabia was at an end. A brief review may be of use before we pass on to the wars without.

Review of the military operations which crushed the apostasy.

North, east, south, and west throughout the peninsula, the circle of victory was now complete. It began, we might say, with the avenging expedition of Osâma, directed by the Prophet against the Syrian border. This was followed up, more leisurely, by the arms of Amru, who restored the prestige of Islam amongst the Codhâa and other tribes on the Roman frontier. During Osâma's absence the brave Caliph, with but a scanty following, beat back the rebel tribes which, hovering around Medîna, threatened the heart of Islam. Then followed Khâlid's brilliant achievements, which, beginning with the Beni Tay on the north-east, and reclaiming the apostate tribes as he moved south, ended with the bloody and decisive field of Yemâma in the centre of Arabia. The flower of the Moslem troops was engaged in this great struggle, which decided the fate of Islam, then trembling in the balance; and while it was in progress, operations languished elsewhere. Subsequently, the campaign throughout the peninsula was carried on vigorously, but in many quarters with limited resources and varying fortune; till Ikrima, sweeping down the eastern coast, joined Mohâjir in the south, and stamped out the last embers of apostasy.

The rebellion was totally suppressed, but the people re-

mained still backward and sullen. The wild and turbulent tribes were brought back unwillingly. They chafed at the demand of tithe and obedience to Medîna. It was simply force and fear that as yet attached them to the Caliph. The question occurs, what would have been the fortune of Islam had no grand impulse arisen from without? It may be difficult to say, but the prospect certainly was not encouraging. Convictions so shallow and aspirations so low as those of the Bedouin would soon have disappeared; and force and fear could not long have availed to hold together the repellent atoms which go to form the Arab nation. The South was jealous of the North; the Bedouins of the desert scorned the population settled in towns and villages; every tribe had some cause of rivalry with its neighbour; new feuds were ever arising out of the law of blood. Even in Medîna, the cradle of the faith, the Beni Aus were impatient of the Beni Khazraj, and both were jealous of the Refugees from Mecca. The only authority recognised by a Bedouin is the authority of his tribal chief, and even that sits lightly. To him freedom is life; and dependence on a central power most hateful. The yoke of Islam (had nothing external supervened) would soon have been shaken off, and Arabia returned again to its former state. But fortunately for Islam (sadly for the interests of humanity) a new idea electrified the nation. No sooner was apostasy put down than, first in Chaldæa and then in Syria, collision with the Christian tribes kindled the fire of foreign war; and forthwith the Arabs, both town and Bedouin, were riveted to Islam by a common bond—the love of rapine and the lust of spoil.

Arabia sullen, till roused by the war-cry from without.

That the heritage of Islam is the world was an afterthought. The idea (spite of much proleptic tradition) had presented itself but dimly, if at all, to Mahomet himself. His world was Arabia; and for it Islam was sent. From first to last the call was made primarily to Arabs and to them alone. It is true that, some years before his death, Mahomet

The Moslem crusade due to circumstance rather than design.

had summoned certain kings and princes to confess the catholic faith of Abraham; but the step had not in any way been followed up. Nor was it otherwise with the command to fight against idolators, Jews, and Christians: that command was announced to the Arab tribes assembled in pilgrimage at Minâ;[1] it had reference only to them, and had no immediate bearing whatever on warfare beyond the bounds of the peninsula. The Prophet's dying legacy was to the same effect:—'See,' said he, 'that there be but one faith throughout Arabia.' The seed of a universal claim, indeed, had been sown; but that it ever germinated was due to circumstances rather than design. Even Omar, after his *rôle* of splendid victories, manifested a continual dread lest his armies should proceed too far; and, separated by some gulf or mountain range, should be cut off from succour and exposed to danger. Therefore he set barriers (as we shall see) to the ambition of his people, beyond which they should not pass.

The Arabs issue forth as the conquerors of the world.

Nevertheless, universal empire was altogether in accord with the spirit of the faith. 'When a people leaveth off to fight in the ways of the Lord,' said Abu Bekr in his inaugural address (and, in saying it, struck the key-note of Islam), 'the Lord casteth off that people.' And so, when the Rubicon, the border land of Arabia, was once crossed, the horizon enlarged in ever-widening circles, till it embraced the world. Now indeed the marauding spirit of the Bedouin was in unison with the militant spirit of Islam. The cry of plunder and of conquest reverberated throughout the land, and was answered eagerly. The movement began naturally with the tribes in the north which had been first reclaimed from their apostasy, and whose restless spirit led them over the frontier. Later on, in the second year of the Caliphate, the exodus spread to the people of the south. At first the Caliph forbade that help

[1] See *Life of Mahomet*, chap. xxix.

should be taken from such as had backslidden. The privilege of fighting for the faith was reserved for those who had remained firm in its profession. But, step by step, as new spheres opened out, and the cry ran through the land for fresh levies to fill up the 'martyr' gaps, the ban was put aside, and all were welcome. Warrior after warrior, column after column, whole tribes in endless succession, with their women and children, issued forth to battle. And ever, at the marvellous tale of cities conquered, of booty rich beyond compute, of fair captives distributed on the field—'to every man a damsel or two,' and, above all, at the sight of the royal Fifth of spoil and slaves sent to Medîna—fresh tribes arose and went. Onward and still onward, like swarms from the hive, one after another they poured forth, pressed first to the north, and spread thence in great masses to the east and west.

Discredit still attaching to apostasy.

It must not, however, be overlooked that though apostasy was thus condoned, and in the blaze of victory almost forgotten, a certain discredit still clung to the backslider. His guilt was not like that of others who had committed sins, however black, ignorantly before conversion. The apostate, having been once enlightened, cast by his fall a deliberate slur upon Islam. And therefore no chief who had joined the great apostasy was ever promoted to a chief command. He might fight, and was welcome, in the ranks, and was even allowed to head small parties of fifty or a hundred; but to the last the post of leader was denied him.

Slaves of Arab blood set free.

The Arab race, thus emerging from its desert-home, became the aristocracy of Islam. Conquered nations, even if they embraced the faith, fell into a lower class. The Arabs were the dominant caste wheresoever they might go, and it was only as 'clients' of the noble race that people of other lands could share their privileges—crumbs, as it were, which fell from off their table. Yet great numbers of the Arabs themselves were slaves, taken prisoner during the apostasy or in previous intertribal warfare, and held in

captivity by their fellow-countrymen. Omar felt the inconsistency. It was not fit that any of the noble race should remain in bondage. When, therefore, he succeeded to the Caliphate, he decreed their freedom. 'The Lord,' he said, 'hath given to us of Arab blood the victory, and great conquests without. It is not meet that any one of us, taken captive in the days of ignorance,[1] or in the wars against the apostate tribes, should be holden in slavery.' All slaves of Arab descent were accordingly ransomed, excepting only such bondmaids as had borne their masters children. Men who had lost wives or children now set out in search, if haply they might find and claim them. Strange tales are told of some of these disconsolate journeys. Ashâth recovered two of his wives taken captive in Nojeir. But some of the women who had been carried prisoners to Medîna preferred remaining with their captors.[2]

Death of Fâtima, the Prophet's daughter.

Before passing on to more stirring scenes, it may be proper here to notice some domestic events occurring in the first year of Abu Bekr's Caliphate. In it Fâtima, the Prophet's daughter and wife of Aly, died. She had claimed a share in her father's property. Repairing, in company with her husband, to the Caliph, she said: 'Give me the inheritance that falleth to me.' Abu Bekr inquired whether it was her portion of the household goods that she desired. 'Fadak and Kheibar,' she answered, 'and the tithe lands of Medîna—my portion therein, even as thy daughters will inherit of thee when thou diest.' The Caliph answered: 'Truly thy father was better than I, and thou art better than my daughters. But the Prophet hath said, *No one*

[1] 'The days of Ignorance,' that is, the period preceding Islam.

[2] Two such are named by Tabari, i. p. 248.

A light ransom was fixed for each Arab slave, namely seven camels and six young ones. In the case of some tribes which had suffered most severely (as the Beni Hanîfa, the Beni Kinda, and the people of Omân discomfited at Dabâ), even this was remitted.

shall be my heir; that which I leave shall be for alms. Now, therefore, the family of Mahomet shall not eat of these lands; for, by the Lord! I will not alter a tittle of that which he hath ordained. But,' added he, 'if thou art certain that thy father gave thee this property, I will accept thy word, and fulfil his promise.' She answered that she had no evidence excepting that of Omm Ayman, the Prophet's aged nurse, who had said that her father had given her Fadak.[1] So Abu Bekr maintained his decision. Fâtima felt aggrieved, and was much displeased. She survived but a few months,[2] leaving two sons, Hasan and Hosein, through whom alone the issue of Mahomet was perpetuated. Aly, who, during her lifetime, had held aloof, began after her decease, like the rest of the chief Companions, to frequent the Caliph's court.

Death of Abu Bekr's son.

In this year Abu Bekr lost his son Abdallah, who died from the effects of a wound received at the siege of Tâyif.

Omar Chief Justice.

As supreme judge in civil causes, the Caliph nominated Omar; but warlike operations so occupied men's minds, that for the time the office was a sinecure.

The first Pilgrimage under the Caliphate. Dzul Hijj. A.H. XI. March. A.D. 633.

The presidency at the annual Pilgrimage is always carefully recorded by the annalists of Islam. The Caliph was too much engrossed with the commotion throughout Arabia to proceed himself to Mecca on the first Pilgrimage of his reign, and he therefore commissioned Attâb, governor of the holy city, to preside in his stead.[3]

So ended the first year of the Caliphate.

[1] *Fadak* was a Jewish settlement north of Medîna, conquered by Mahomet at the same time as Kheibar. Portions of both were retained by Mahomet for the support of his household. (See *Life of Mahomet*, pp. 394 and 548.)

[2] According to most authorities she survived her father six months; others say only three.

[3] Some say that Abu Bekr appointed Abd al Rahmân to the duty. The uncertainty on this (to the Moslem) most important point is indicative of the confusion which still prevailed, and the vagueness of tradition for the period immediately following Mahomet's death.

CHAPTER X.

CAMPAIGN OF KHALID IN IRAC.

A.H. XII. A.D. 633.

Collision with border tribes led to conflict with Roman and Persian empires.

CHALDÆA and the south of Syria belong, as well by nature as by population, to Arabia. The tribes inhabiting that region, partly heathen, at the time we write of, but chiefly Christian, formed an integral portion of the Arab race. As these resisted the Moslem columns engaged on the frontier, they were eventually supported by their respective sovereigns —the western tribes by the Byzantine empire, and the eastern by Persia. Thus through them the struggle spread, and soon brought Islam face to face in mortal conflict with the two great Powers of the east and west.

History of Byzantine and Persian campaigns dependent exclusively on Arabian sources.

The sources of our history, being purely Arabian, throw little light on the condition of the provinces to which the scene will now be transferred. With the Roman empire, the Arabs of the peninsula had never at any time much acquaintance or concern, and the Byzantine annals of Syria are suddenly quenched by the Saracenic cataclysm. A few brief lines is all we have from them of the momentous events on which we are about to enter. Of the Eastern empire, succeeding as the Arabs did to the Sassanide dynasty, they naturally had a greater interest in the antecedents; and we have, through their historians, glimpses of the anarchy that now prevailed in Persia. But even this is, at the best, fragmentary and imperfect.

It is enough, for our present purpose, to know that in neither of the two great powers had the nerve and virtue of

early days survived. Luxury, oppression, religious strife, and military disaster had undermined their strength and impaired their vigour. The Roman empire, extinguished in the west by barbarian hordes, existed only in the provinces governed by the Byzantine capital. Between the Kaiser and the Chosroes war had long prevailed; and Syria or Mesopotamia had been the prize now of one, now of the other. By the last turn of fortune, Heraclius, in a brilliant campaign directed from the Black Sea, had routed the Persians on the field of Nineveh, and marched triumphantly to the very gates of Ctesiphon (*Medâin*). The Chosroes, with eighteen of his sons, was put to death by Siroes, who enjoyed but a few months the fruit of his parricidal crime; and 'in the space of four years, the royal title was assumed by nine candidates, who disputed, with the sword or dagger, the fragments of an exhausted monarchy.'[1] Such was the condition of Persia, its court imbecile and anarchy rampant, at the time when Abu Bekr was engaged in his struggle with the apostate tribes. Nevertheless, the Arabian armies met with a fiercer and more protracted opposition on the Persian than on the Syrian side. And the reason is that Islam aimed its blow at the very heart of Persia. Constantinople might remain, with Syria gone, ignobly safe. But if the Arabs gained Irâc, Ctesiphon must fall into their hands.

Roman and Persian empires at Mahomet's death.

A.H. VI. A.D. 627.

Among the chiefs who aided Alâ in the reoccupation of Bahrein, Mothanna has been named.[2] Advancing up the shore of the Persian Gulf, he reduced Catîf, and carried his victorious army into the delta of the Euphrates. 'Who is this Mothanna?' asked Abu Bekr, as tidings of his success kept reaching Medîna; 'and to what tribe doth he belong?' Learning that he was of the Beni Bekr ibn Wâil, he gave him a commission to carry forward his arms, fighting in the

Mothanna attacks the border tribes of Irâc.

[1] Gibbon, chap. xlvi.

[2] Above, p. 50.

ways of the Lord.[1] The service was just such as the Arabs loved; and Mothanna's column was soon swelled to 8,000 men. But opposition gathered in front. The Christian and heathen tribes were roused; and Abu Bekr, anticipating a struggle strongly backed by other forces in their rear, resolved that (Khâlid being now at leisure) 'the Sword of the Lord' should be unsheathed there.

Abu Bekr sends troops under Khâlid and Iyâdh towards Irâc. A.H. XII. March, A.D. 633.

It was now the beginning of the twelfth year of the Hegira. Rebellion had been put down in the centre of Arabia, and the southern tribes were also in fair way to pacification. It was Abu Bekr's policy to turn the victorious arms of the restless Arabs to similar work elsewhere. He therefore despatched two armies to the northern frontier. One of these, under command of Khâlid, joined by Mothanna, was to march on Obolla near the mouth of the Euphrates, and thence, driving the enemy up its western shore, to work its way towards Hîra, the capital of Irâc. Iyâdh, at the head of the other, was directed to Dûmat al Jendal, which had cast off its allegiance; and thence to pass also on to Hîra. Whichever of the two first reached and captured that city was to be in command of the country.[2]

Khâlid joins Mothanna in Irâc.

The progress of Iyâdh was hampered by his enemy, and he was long detained in the Jôf, or country about Dûma. Khâlid met with no such obstacle. His army, like Mothanna's, was swelled on its march from Yemâma to Irâc by large bodies of Bedouins. These were of the greater service as his numbers had been thinned not only by the carnage at Yemâma, but also by the free permission, which, after their long and arduous campaign, the Caliph had given the army,

[1] By some accounts Mothanna appeared in person before Abu Bekr and promised to engage the local tribes in carrying the attack into the border lands of Irâc.

[2] Such are said to have been Abu Bekr's orders; but tradition here probably anticipates the march of events. It is very doubtful whether he had yet the city of Hîra in view. The campaign widened, and the aims of Khâlid became more definite as his victories led him onwards.

of furlough to their homes. Nevertheless, the expedition was so popular that when Khâlid, after a flying visit to the Caliph at Medîna, rejoined his camp as it neared the mouth of the Euphrates, he found himself at the head of 10,000 men; and this besides the 8,000 of Mothanna, who hastened loyally to place himself under the great leader's command.

The Syrian desert and Mesopotamia.

The country on which they had now entered was, in some of its features, familiar to the invading army, but in others new and strange. From the head of the Persian Gulf to the Dead Sea there stretches right across the peninsula a stony wilderness, trackless and waterless. As you advance north, nature relaxes its severity; the plain, still a desert, is at certain seasons clothed with verdure, bright with flowers and instinct with the song of birds and hum of insect life. Such is the pasture-land which for several hundred miles extends from Damascus to the Tigris. Still further north, the desert features gradually disappear, and, about the latitude of Mosul, are blended with the hills and fields of Asia Minor. Athwart this vast plain, from Aleppo to Babylon, runs the river Euphrates, and the far east is bounded by the Tigris flowing under the mountain ranges of Persia. Between the two rivers lies the *Jezîra*, or 'Island,' of Mesopotamia, full of patriarchal memories. Over this great waste there roamed (as still roam) Bedouin tribes with their flocks and herds. The greater part of these Arabs had for centuries professed the Christian religion. Those on the Syrian side, as the Beni Ghassân of Bostra, owed allegiance to the Roman Empire; while on the east, like the Lakhmites of Hîra, they were dependent upon Persia.[1] But nomad life tends to fickleness of attachment and laxity of faith; and, not infrequently, affinity with their brethren of Arabia, and the lust of plunder, led these northern Arabs, deserting now their ancient allies and their ancestral faith, to cast in their lot with the invading columns.

[1] The pre-Islamite history of these Arab races is given in the introductory chapters to the *Life of Mahomet*, vol. i.

Chaldæa and the delta of the Euphrates. Irâc Araby.

The lower Euphrates—Irâc Araby[1]—is in striking contrast with the region just described. The two great rivers of Mesopotamia, while yet more than 500 miles above the sea, draw close to one another. Below this point, the land, naturally rich, is easily supplied with water, and when irrigated is exuberantly fertile. Instead of joining where they approach, the two rivers still keep apart, and for two or three hundred miles, running parallel, inclose what was the memorable plain of Dura. The country (as now) was covered with long hillocks and mounds, the remains of an ancient network of irrigation,[2] and also strewed with fragments of brick and pottery, remnants of the dim ages of antiquity. At the time of which we write, the face of the land was not, as it is for the most part now, a barren waste, but richly cultivated and irrigated by canals. On the Tigris, a little below the point of its drawing near the Euphrates, was Medâin, 'the twin city' (combining the sites of both Seleucia and Ctesiphon), at this time the capital of Persia. Fifty miles to the south of it a series of shapeless mounds, looking down on the 'great river' Euphrates, marked the site of ancient Babylon, and from their summit, still to the south, might be descried the Birs Nimrûd (or 'Tower of Babel') rearing its weird head on the horizon of the verdant plain. Some thirty miles yet further south lay Hîra, the capital of the Lakhmites and of the Arab tribes around. It stood (like its successor Kûfa) upon the Bâdacla, a branch which issues from the right bank of the Euphrates by a channel in the live rock, sixteen miles above Babylon, cut by the hand of man, but of unknown antiquity.[3] Sweeping to the west of the parent river, the

[1] *i.e.* 'Irâc of the Arabs' as distinguished from *Irâc Ajemy*, 'foreign' or Persian Irâc.

[2] The mounds are, no doubt, not only the remains of embankments but also of the clearances of silt, which (as we know in India) become hillocks in the course of time.

[3] This, as well as the main stream, is sometimes called by our historians *Furât*, or Euphrates; at other times by its proper name of *Bâdacla*, and also *Al Atîck*, the 'old' or deserted channel; but the streams have varied their course from age to age.

rival stream, in its southward course, feeds many marshes, and especially the great lake called the 'Sea of Najaf'; after a wide circuit it rejoins the Euphrates above its junction with the Tigris. There was in olden times another branch still further to the west, the *Khandac*, or 'Trench of Sapor,' which intended as a bar to Bedouin incursions, and, taking a yet wider circuit, fell into the Euphrates near Obolla, at the head of the Persian Gulf. This is now dry, but originally it carried a stream which, like the other, helped materially to widen the green belt continually narrowed and pressed in upon by the dry and sandy desert beyond. The lower delta again has features of its own. It is subject to tidal flow for fifty miles above the junction of the two rivers. Alluvial, low, and watered with ease, it is covered with a sea of corn, and has, not without reason, been called 'the garden of the world.' Besides the familiar palm, the country abounded with the fig, mulberry, and pomegranate. But the climate was close and oppressive; the fens and marshes, always liable to inundation, were aggravated by the neglect of dams and sluices in those days of anarchy;[1] and the Arab, used to the sandy steppes of the peninsula, gazed wonderingly at the luxuriant growth of reeds and rushes, and at buffalos driven by the pestiferous insects to hide their unwieldy bodies beneath the water, their heads alone appearing, or splashing lazily through the shallow waste of endless lagoons. All Chaldæa, from the estuary upwards, was cultivated, as now, by *Fellaheen*, or Arab peasantry, and these were lorded over by *Dihcâns*, or collectors commissioned by the Persian Court.[2] Such was the magnificent province lying between the desert and the mountain range

[1] The country suffers similarly in the present day at the hands of the Turkish Government. A traveller writes regarding it: 'From the most wanton and disgraceful neglect, the Tigris and Euphrates, in the lower part of their course, are breaking from their natural beds, forming vast marshes, turning fertile lands into a wilderness,' &c.

[2] These seem to have occupied a position similar to that of the rent *Talookdars* in Upper India

of Persia, the cradle of civilisation and the arts, which attracted the first crusade of the Moslem arms.

Khâlid advances on the delta, and summons Hormuz.

The Satrap of the delta was Hormuz, a Persian prince, who (we are told), 'fighting the tribes of Arabia by land, and the Indians by sea, guarded thus the portals of the Empire.' But he was hateful to his Arab subjects, and his name for tyranny had become a byword. To him, as master of the tribes gathering in his front, Khâlid addressed a letter in the haughty type of Moslem summons. '*Accept the faith and thou art safe, or else pay tribute, thou and thy people; which thing if thou refusest, thou shalt have thyself to blame. A people is already upon thee, loving death, even as thou lovest life.*' Then he ordered an advance. Mothanna led the first column; Hâtim, son of Adi (the famous chieftain of the Beni Tay), the second. Khâlid brought up the rear; all three converging upon Hafîr, a station on the Persian frontier by the desert border.[1]

Khâlid routs the army of the Persians. *Battle of Chains.*

Startled by the strange summons, Hormuz informed the king, and set out to meet the invader with an army, the wings of which were commanded by princes of the royal house. He marched in haste, thinking to have an easy victory over the untrained tribes of the desert; and reaching

[1] Beyond the general outline we must not look for much trustworthy detail at the outset of these campaigns. The narrative of them is brief and summary, often confused and contradictory. For example, Hîra is said by some to have submitted at the outset and agreed to pay tribute, which is inconsistent with the course of the narrative. The summons to Hormuz as given in the text savours too much of the set type of after days to be above suspicion; so with the constant repetition of single combats, without which the historians seem to think no Arab battle complete.

There is one point of some importance. It is the call on Hormuz *to pay tribute.* Now, tribute was permitted by Mahomet only to 'the people of the Book,' that is, to Jews and Christians. No such immunity was allowed to the heathen, who were to be fought against to the bitter end. Zoroastrians (for such was Hormuz) should strictly have been offered no terms *but Islam.* They had not, however, yet been thought of, for they were altogether beyond the limits and tribes of Arabia. Eventually, Omar ruled that having 'a Book' or Revelation, they might be admitted into the category of those to be spared on payment of tribute. But, as I have said, the summons is no doubt cast in the conventional mould of later days.

first the encamping ground, took possession of the springs. Khâlid, coming up, bade his force alight, and at once unload their burdens. 'Then,' said he, 'let us fight for the water forthwith; by my life! the springs shall be for the braver of the two.' Thereupon Hormuz challenged Khâlid to single combat, and, though he treacherously posted an ambuscade, was in the encounter slain. The Moslems then rushed forward, and with great slaughter put the enemy to flight, and pursued them to the banks of the Euphrates. The Arabs had now a foretaste of the spoils of Persia. The share of each horseman was one thousand dirhems, besides great store of arms.[1] The jewelled tiara of Hormuz, symbol of his rank, and valued at a hundred thousand pieces, was sent to the Caliph with the royal Fifth.[2] An elephant taken in the field was marched as part of the prize to Medîna; but having been paraded about the town, much to the wonder of the admiring citizens, was sent back as unsuitable to the place.[3] The action was called 'the Battle of the Chains,' for we are told that a portion of the Persian army was bound together to prevent its giving way.[4]

Moharram, A.H. XII. March, A.D. 633.

The defeated army fled towards the capital, and Mothanna with his horse hastened after them. Crossing the Euphrates, he came upon a fortress called 'The Lady's Castle,' held by

'The Lady's Castle.'

[1] Horsemen received *three* shares; the foot soldiers one. This was the standing rule from the time of the Prophet. Two shares were for the horse.

[2] The grade of Persian nobility was marked by the costliness of the jewelled turban.

[3] No elephant had ever been seen before at Medîna, and only one at Mecca—'the year of the elephant' marking the era of Abraha's attack (*Life of Mahomet*, p. xxvi.). The astonishment of the women and children of Medîna was unbounded, and some inquired in childish amazement whether it was an artificial thing, or really was a work of nature.

[4] It is also called the battle of Kâtzima, a neighbouring town reduced by Khâlid.

This tale of soldiers being chained together, or tied with ropes, is commonly told both of Persian and Roman armies. How far it is founded on fact it is difficult to say. We must ever remember that the materials for our story are all *one-sided*, and that there is much ignorance of their enemies displayed by the annalists, as well as much contemptuous fiction regarding them.

a Persian princess. Leaving his brother Moänna to besiege her, he advanced to a second fort defended by the husband. This he took by storm, and put the garrison to the sword; which, when the lady heard of, she embraced Islam, and, forgetting her Persian lord, readily gave her hand to Mothanna's brother.

Persians again defeated at Madzâr.

The ardour of Mothanna was near to causing a disaster. When Hormuz' message reached Medâin, the King despatched Cârin, another prince of the first rank, to reinforce him. Midway he was met by remnants of the defeated army, which, with the two princes, were retreating to Medâin.[1] Here their flight was stayed, and they rallied at Madzâr, on the southern bank of the great canal, or branch of the Tigris which runs athwart the peninsula to the Euphrates. Cârin, thus strengthened, resolved on giving battle to Mothanna, who in his adventurous pursuit had reached thus far. Khâlid, apprised of the check, hastened to relieve his lieutenant, and arrived just in time. The field was fiercely contested; Cârin and both princes lost their lives, and a prodigious number of the enemy was either slain or drowned; the remainder escaped in boats.[2] The deep channel stopped farther advance; but the spoil of the enemy's camp again was very great. Khâlid, encamped on the bank of the canal, scoured the country on either hand, killing all the people fit for war, and taking their women captive. But the Fellaheen, or unwarlike peasants, he left unharmed.

The court was now thoroughly aroused. Arab invaders, they began to say, were best met by Arabs who knew their tactics; and so the king raised a great levy of the Beni Bekr

[1] It will be more convenient hereafter (dropping the Occidental forms of Ctesiphon and Seleucia) to speak of the Persian capital by its Arabic name, *Medâin*.

[2] Cârin, they say, was the last noble of the *first* rank who took the field against the Mussulmans. The slain are put at 30,000, besides those drowned in the canal. Such numbers, always loose, are especially so in the traditions of this early period. Among the prisoners was a Christian, father of the famous jurisconsult Abul Hasan of Bussora (d. A.H. 110). Also Mâckia, afterwards the freedman of Othmân, and Abu Ziâd, freedman of Moghîra.

and other loyal clans, under a famous warrior of their own. He also summoned Bahmân, a veteran general, from the provinces, to command the imperial troops. The combined army, in imposing force, encamped at Walaja, on the farther side of the Euphrates. Leaving a detachment to guard his conquests in the lower delta, Khâlid advanced with the remainder of his army to meet the enemy. The battle was long and obstinate, but was won by the tactics of the Moslem leader, who, when the enemy were exhausted, surprised them by two ambuscades in their rear. The discomfiture was complete. The Persians fled, and with them the Bedouins, but not until several of them had been taken prisoner. Flushed with success and delighted with the bounty spread around, Khâlid called his troops together and addressed them in these stirring words: 'Ye see the riches of the land. Its paths drop fatness and plenty, so that food is scattered about, even as stones are in Arabia. Were it but as a provision for this present life, and no holy war to wage, it were worth our while to fight for these fair fields and banish care and penury for ever.'[1] Khâlid here struck a chord at which every Bedouin heart leapt for joy. Now, also, the cunning device of the Corân, with respect to the other sex, began to tell. Persian ladies, both maids and matrons, 'taken captive by the right hand,' were forthwith, without stint of number, lawful to the conquerors' embrace; and, in the enjoyment of this privilege, they were nothing loth to execute upon the heathen 'the judgment written.' Thus religious fanaticism was kindled by martial ardour, and both riveted by incentives irresistible to the Arab—fight and foray, the spoil of war, and captive charms.[2]

Battle of Walaja. Safar, A.H. XII. April, A.D 633.

Khâlid's oration on gaining the victory.

[1] Khâlid's speech is quoted by Al Kindy the Christian Apologist (Smith and Elder), p. 33.

[2] The *iddat* (or interval prescribed between divorce and re-marriage, or before the cohabitation of a new master with his slave-girl) is not observed in respect of women taken captive on the field of battle. I can find no authority on the subject, but am told by those versed in the law that the only exception is that of women with child, in which event cohabitation would be unlaw-

Battle of Allîs. Safar, A.H. XII. May, A.D. 633.

The cup had but just touched their lips, and many a chance might yet dash it from their hand. The great family of the Beni Bekr ibn Wâil were divided in the struggle, part holding with Khâlid and part with the Persian court. The bitter feeling between the Bedouins of Mesopotamia and the levies of Mothanna was aggravated by defeat and captivity. Smarting under the injury, the Christian tribes roused their nomad brethren on both banks of the Euphrates, and urged the Court of Persia to revenge. Just then, Ardshîr the king fell sick, and Bahmân was detained at court[1]; but he sent an army across the peninsula to join the Bedouins, who, from every side, were flocking to Allîs, on the south of the Euphrates, half way between Hîra and Obolla. News of this great rising forced Khâlid to fall back hastily, and recross the river. Then leaving a strong detachment at Hafîr to secure his rear, he boldly turned to meet the enemy. The Arab tribes first rushed to the attack, and Khâlid slew their leader. Then the Persians advanced, and the Moslems were hard pressed as they had never been before. The battle was fiercely contested, and the issue at one time so doubtful as to make Khâlid vow to the Lord that if he got the victory, the blood of His foes should flow in a river. At last the Persians, unable to withstand his impetuous generalship, broke and fled. To fulfil his savage oath, it was proclaimed by Khâlid that no fugitive should be slain, but that all must be brought alive into the camp. For two days the country was scoured by the Moslem horse, and a great multitude of prisoners gathered. Then the butchery commenced in the dry bed of a canal, but the earth drank up the blood. Company after company was beheaded, and still the gory flux remained. At last, on the advice of an Arab chief, Khâlid had a flood-gate opened above, and the crimson tide re-

The 'River of Blood.'

ful till after delivery. In all other cases, in conformity with the precedent of the Prophet's marriage with Safia at Kheibar, the captives, whether maid or matron, are lawful to the captors' embrace upon the spot (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 391).

[1] Tabari tells us that every month it was the turn of a new prince to rule as minister, and this was Bahmân's month.

deemed his vow. There were flour-mills upon the spot, and Tabari tells us, with apparent satisfaction, that for three days, corn for the whole army was ground by the reddened flood. The memory of the deed was handed down in the name of the 'River of Blood,' by which thereafter this stream of infamous memory was called.[1]

The Persian supper on the field of battle.

When the battle was over, the army found ready spread in the camp of the enemy a sumptuous repast, to which the Persians, when surprised by Khâlid, were about to sit down. It was a novel experience for the simple Arabs, who handled the white fritters with childish delight, and devoured rich pancakes and other delicacies of an eastern table with avidity. Khâlid ate his supper leaning on the body of a stalwart hero, 'the equal of a thousand warriors,' whom, in single combat, he had but just cut down.'

Abu Bekr delighted at the victory.

Tidings of the victory, with a choice portion of the spoil, a welcome earnest of the royal Fifth to follow, were at once despatched to Abu Bekr. The messenger, himself a brave warrior (for the duty was an honourable one) described the heat and progress of the battle, the feats and prowess of the more distinguished heroes, the multitude of the captives (the butchery, no doubt, as well) and the riches of the spoil. The Caliph, overjoyed at his glowing tale, bestowed upon the envoy, in token of his royal favour, a beautiful damsel from amongst the captive maidens he had carried with him.[2]

[1] The slain are given at the fabulous figure of 70,000. The decapitation of the captives went on for a night and a day (so we are told), and then they scoured the country for more. Cacâa, one of the Arab captains, told Khâlid that 'the Lord had forbidden the earth to allow human blood to flow upon its face more than the length of a man's dress,' and that it never would run in a stream until water was turned on. Blood, as we know, soon thickens and curdles of itself.

There is, presumably, great exaggeration in the story, and I should willingly have put down the whole as a fiction growing out of the name of the river; but the narrative unfortunately is in keeping with the bloodthirstiness of the Arab crusaders, and specially with the character of 'the Sword of the Lord.' The tradition about the flour-mills comes from Moghîra, through one of Tabari's standing string of traditional authorities.

[2] She bore him children, or the circumstance would probably have been

The principality of Hîra.

For the moment the spirit of the enemy, both Bedouin and Persian, was broken; but the former had proved so troublesome, and occupied a position in the desert pastures from which they could so materially annoy his flank and rear and his communications with Arabia, that Khâlid resolved on reducing the whole tract west of the Euphrates occupied by the Bedouins, with its capital city of Hîra. The last of the Lakhmite dynasty, which had long ruled over Hîra, died in prison at the Persian Court five and twenty years before; and he was replaced by a favourite, Iyâs ibn Cabîsa, from the Beni Tay. A few years after, a Persian army, with their allies from Hîra, was signally defeated by the Beni Bekr ibn Wâil on the field of Dzu Câr; and from the year 614 A.D. the city was governed by a *Marzabân*, or Persian Satrap. Partly from its interests being akin to those of the Christian tribes of Mesopotamia, partly from its being a dependency of Persia, the influence of Hîra was little felt in Arabia proper. But recent events had shown that even the Beni Bekr might combine with the border capital to resist the invader. To prevent the recurrence of such a danger, Khâlid now directed his steps to Hîra.[1]

Amghîsia sacked.

With this view he advanced rapidly up the western bank of the Euphrates, and surprised Amghîsia, a town on the same channel as Hîra, and its rival in size and wealth.[2] The inhabitants, without resisting, fled, and the booty was so rich that each horseman took 1,500 dirhems. When the Fifth reached Medîna, Abu Bekr was overwhelmed at the sight; 'O ye Coreish,' he exclaimed in ecstasy, 'verily your

too common to merit a place in tradition. Abu Bekr was so charmed with his stalwart mien that he burst forth in a martial couplet in the envoy's praise.

[1] For the history of Hîra up to this time, see *Life of Mahomet*, vol. i. introd. chap. iii. The Lakhmite dynasty sprang from the *southern* branch of the Arabs, and, both on this account and for the reasons stated in the text, their influence did not penetrate deeply into the peninsula.

[2] Called also Manîshia. It never recovered the calamity; at any rate we do not hear of it again.

lion, the lion of Islam, hath leapt upon the lion of Persia, and spoiled him of his prey. Surely the womb is exhausted. Woman shall no more bear a second Khâlid!'

Hîra besieged, capitulates.

Finding boats at Amghîsia, Khâlid embarked his infantry and baggage, and was tracking up the Bâdacla to Hîra, when the flotilla grounded suddenly. Azâdzuba, the Satrap of Hîra, had sent his son to lay open the irrigating escapes, and hence the dried-up channel and bewilderment of the Moslems.[1] Apprised by the boatmen of the cause, Khâlid hastened with a flying squadron to the canal-head, slew the Satrap's son, and, having closed the sluices, enabled the boats again to ascend. Then the army, having disembarked and taken possession of the beautiful palaces of Khawarnac and Najaf, the summer residence of the princes of Hîra, encamped before the city walls.[2] The Satrap, just then receiving intelligence of the king's decease, and stunned by the death of his own son, fled across the river. The city was called upon to surrender, but, defended as it was by four citadels, resisted. The ramparts were manned, and the besiegers kept at bay by a continuous discharge of missiles. But a monastery and cloisters lay without; and the monks and clergy, exposed to the fury of the besiegers, induced the citizens to capitulate. The chief men agreed to the terms demanded, which were embodied in a treaty. Then they brought gifts, which Khâlid accepted, and despatched, with tidings of the surrender, to Medîna. Abu Bekr ratified the treaty and accepted the presents, but desired that their value should be deducted from the tribute.

[1] The escapes were opened perhaps as well to flood the country and impede the enemy's progress, as to lay the navigating channel dry. These channels have greatly altered, so that attempt at identification would be fruitless.

[2] The palace of Khawarnac was built 200 years before, by Nomân I., for the reception of his pupil Bahrâm Gour, heir-apparent to the throne of Persia. Sinnimâr was the architect. There was a stone, so the story runs, which, if removed, the whole building would fall. The secret was known to Sinnimâr alone; and Nomân dashed him from the top, that the secret might perish with him. (*Life of Mahomet*, vol. i. p. clxxi.)

Terms of treaty with Hîra.

The men of Hîra bound themselves to pay a heavy tribute yearly, to which all classes, saving religious mendicants, should be assessed. The Moslems, on their part, engaged to protect the city from attack. The treaty did not stand long, but it is interesting as being the first concluded with a principality without the peninsula.[1] One strange condition was insisted on. The beauty of Kerâmat, sister of a leading citizen, had been long proverbial, and Showeil, one of Khâlid's soldiers, laid claim to her on the ground that Mahomet, hearing him extol her charms, had promised (so the story runs) that when Hîra was captured, she should be his bride. Though now well stricken in years, Khâlid insisted that Showeil should have her. The thing was grievous to the lady's household, but she took it lightly. 'Care not for it,' she said; 'what will he do with an old woman like me? The fool saw me in my youth, and hath forgotten that youth remaineth not for ever.' Showeil soon found out that it was even so, and was glad to name a ransom, which she paid at once, and then departed to her people.[2]

[1] The treaty is given as follows:—'This is the Treaty of Khâlid with the son of Adi, Amr son of Abd al Masîh, and Iyâs ibn Cabîsa, empowered in that behalf by the citizens of Hîra. They shall pay, year by year, 190,000 dirhems, to be levied on clergy and laity, saving mendicants who have abjured the world. The Mussulmans on their side shall protect the city, otherwise there will be no obligation to pay the tribute. If the city be disloyal in word or deed, the treaty shall be void.' The terms are given alike in two independent traditions; but the rising, which shortly after swept over the land, cancelled it.

[2] Showeil was an old dotard. When Kerâmat said to him, 'What carest thou for an old creature like me?' he replied, 'I am not my mother's son if I take less for thee than a thousand dirhems.' She feigned to think it much, but paid it down. When she had gone, his companions laughed at him for asking such a trifling sum for so distinguished a captive. He went to Khâlid: 'I meant,' he said, 'to ask the highest figure that there was; but now they tell me that numbers go beyond a thousand, and that I did not ask enough. Give me, therefore, a fitting ransom.' Khâlid said: 'Thou purposedst one thing, my friend, and the Lord purposed another. I judge by what appeareth, and leave thy purposes alone.' I give the story as I find it, absurd as it appears, for the lady is said to have been fourscore years of age. The romance of early love, at any rate, was soon changed into a more sordid passion. The tale,

Hîra, though occupied by Khâlid, remains Christian. A.H. XII. A.D. 633.

The occupation of Hîra was the first definite step in the outward movement of Islam. Here Khâlid fixed his head-quarters, and remained for about a year. It was, in fact, the earliest Moslem capital beyond the limits of Arabia. The administration was left with the heads of the native municipality, who, together with the surrounding population, were, if not friendly, at the least neutral. Khâlid, indeed, expected that, being of Arab descent, and themselves long ruled by a native dynasty, the citizens of Hîra would actively have joined his cause. Adi, grandson of the poet of that name, was one of the deputation which concluded the peace. 'Tell me,' said Khâlid rallying him, 'whether ye be of Persian blood?' 'Judge by our speech: doth that betray ignoble birth?' 'True,' answered Khâlid; 'then why do ye not join our faith, and cast in your lot with us?' 'Nay,' answered the Christian, 'that we shall never do; the faith of our fathers we shall not abjure, but shall pay tribute unto you.' 'Beshrew the fools!' cried Khâlid; 'Unbelief is as the trackless desert, and he that treadeth it the silliest of mankind. Here two guides are offered, an Arab and a Stranger; and of the two they choose the Stranger!' The flux and reflux of Roman invasion had, no doubt, loosened their faith in Persia; but the court of Medâin was near at hand, and, though in the last stage of senility, sufficiently strong to command the allegiance of a small dependency like Hîra. The permanence of Arab conquest, too, was yet uncertain; the love of their ancestral faith was still predominant; and so the city chose to remain as tributary. And several centuries later we find the inhabitants of the neighbourhood in considerable numbers still attached to the Christian faith.[1]

though surrounded by marvels (*e.g.* Mahomet's foretelling the conquest of Hira), is, no doubt, founded on some slight substratum of fact. The lady's age must be exaggerated as well as the simplicity of Showeil, since she was the daughter of Abd al Masîh who headed the deputation from the city.

[1] Tradition gives with considerable zest a somewhat coarse and childish

Public prayer established. 'The Service of Victory.'

Public prayer, outward symbol of the dominant faith, was now established; and the citizens might hear the cry of the Muedzzin, as, five times a day, beginning with the earliest dawn, the call to prayer resounded from the adjacent camp. Khâlid celebrated his success in a special *Service of victory*. The occasion was memorable. Clothed in a loose flowing robe girt about the neck, he turned, when the prayers were over, to the assembly, and thus extolled their bravery: 'In the field of Mûta (where he had himself rallied the dispersed army) nine swords were broken in my hand.[1] But I met not there any foe to match those ye have encountered here; and of these none more valiant than the men of Allîs.' It is, however, open to remark that the early campaign in Irâc is surrounded by tradition with a special halo; for the loss here on the Moslem side was not great, and, judged by this unerring test, the fighting could

conversation between Khâlid and the aged Abd al Masih (called Ibn Backîla, 'son of the bean-stalk,' from his green dress), who headed the deputation. 'Whence comest thou?' asked the conqueror. 'From my mother's womb.' 'And where art thou now?' 'In my clothes,' and so on. Asked what was the most wonderful thing he had ever seen, he said, 'The road from Hira to Damascus, which was lined in my early days with villages all along, so that a woman could travel on it alone, taking with her a single cake; but that time hath long passed by.' His attendant carried a little bag containing a quick poison, which his master was prepared to swallow if any indignity had been shown him. Khâlid took and swallowed it, saying that no soul could die before its time. As no ill effect followed, the chief was lost in amazement, and declared that Khâlid must be irresistible. Marvellous tales of this sort are, however, very rare now. Some touching verses are recorded as sung by Ibn Backîla on the fall of Hira. Here is a specimen:—

Now that the Princes of the house of Mundzir are gone, shall I ever again behold the royal herd of camels returning at eve from the pastures of Khawarnac and Sedîr?
Now that the horsemen of Noumân are passed away, shall I ever again feed the young she-camel on the pastures between Mecca and Hafir?
Like a flock of goats on a stormy day, we are scattered by the Beni Maâd (the invading Moslems), even as pieces of camels slaughtered for the feast.
Heretofore our homes were sacred, and we like the teats of a well-filled udder,
Yielding tribute at the appointed times to the Chosroes, and imposts in cattle and gold.
Alas! even so is the changeful wheel (bucket) of the well of fortune. Now the day brightens with joy and gladness, and now it is dark with sorrow and grief.

Masûdi speaks of the Ibâdites (the Christian aborigines of Hîra) as still in his time inhabiting this neighbourhood.

[1] For the field of Mûta, where Khâlid rallied the fragments of the Moslem army broken by the Roman legions, see *Life of Mahomet*, chap. xxiii.

hardly compare with that of many a well-contested field in the Prophet's time.[1]

Summary administration set up in the conquered province.

While the city of Hîra was left in the immediate hands of its chief men, summary rule was set up over the adjacent country. The *Dihcâns*—great landholders and imperial tax-gatherers—had been waiting upon fortune. Seeing now that, while the Court was inactive, Khâlid carried everything before him, many began to tender submission and enter into engagements with the conqueror for payment of the revenue. Abu Bekr had, in his wisdom, strenuously enjoined that the Fellaheen, or occupiers of the soil, should be maintained in possession, and their rights scrupulously respected. The Persian demand remained unchanged on these, with the addition only of a light poll-tax. In other respects, terms were granted corresponding with those given to Hîra. Holding their ancestral faith, the people became *Zimmies*, or protected dependents. Khâlid undertook to defend them, and they on their part pledged allegiance and bound themselves to give notice if danger threatened.[2] Garrisons were quar-

[1] The 'Service of Victory' consisted of eight continuous Rakáats, or series of prostrations, with the appointed Sura of Victory.

In this first campaign there is no mention of any Moslems killed. There were, no doubt, casualties among the rank and file of the Bedouin tribes, but these are taken little account of. If any 'Companion,' or leader of eminence, had been slain, the fact would, no doubt, have been mentioned. We must remember that most of the soldiers from Medîna had returned to their homes from Yomâma, so that there may not have been many Companions present with Khâlid at this time.

With reference to Khâlid's speech, I should notice that it was the tendency of the Kûfa and Bussora schools to magnify the difficulties of the conquest of Irâc in their own interest, as enhancing their claims upon the revenues of the *Sawâd*, or surrounding province. In this sense there is a fragment from the Arab warrior Amr ibn Cacâa :—

> The Lord water the ground where lie buried the heroes of Irâc
> Upon the dusty plain and beneath the sandy mounds!

And then he mentions in verse the various fields in which they had fallen in this first campaign from Hafîr to the siege of Hîra.

[2] These treaties were mostly abrogated by the rebellion that shortly after swept over the land. But some of the chieftains remained steadfast, as Salûba ibn Nestûba, 'the lord of Cose Nâtick.' His treaty is given verbatim by Tabari, with the witnesses, &c., copied, probably, from the original. He had to pay a tribute of 10,000 dirhems, to be contributed rateably by his people

tered in a few commanding places and the troops were organised into five moveable columns. By these the country was kept in check. In this manner Khâlid held all to the south of the Euphrates, and also the lower delta, stretching from Hîra eastward across the Great River to the banks of the lower Tigris. Throughout this region none were secure from rapine but such as had entered into engagements. Fifty days' grace was allowed to bring in the revenue, and, till it was paid, hostages were kept; a formal discharge was given on payment.[1] The tribute, as well as the booty, was distributed among the army 'for the strengthening of the same.'

Persia paralysed by internal troubles.

Persia was meanwhile hopelessly distracted. The massacre by Siroes and his jealous successors, of the male progeny near the throne, had been so ruthless and complete that no heir of the royal blood could anywhere be found, and a rapid succession of feeble claimants was set up by the princesses left to form the court. Thus paralysed, the Persians could do little more than protect the capital by holding in force the Nahr Shîr, an intervening stream that flowed down the peninsula.[2] This line was threatened by Mothanna; but Abu Bekr gave stringent orders that no advance should be made upon Medâin till all was secure behind. No tidings, moreover, had as yet been received from Iyâdh at Dûma, with whom (as before explained)[3] co-operation was imperative.

A.H. XII. A.D. 633.

Khâlid fretted at remaining thus inactive, 'playing,' as he called it, 'for so many months the woman's part.' But he curbed his ardour, and contented himself with inditing two letters, in an imperious tone, one to 'the Princes of Persia,'

according to each man's means, besides a tax of four dirhems per head (apparently a Persian tax, as it is called *harazat Chosra*).

The terms of these treaties were made by Khâlid, *with the consent and approval of the army*, showing how Khâlid recognised the dominancy of the democratic element.

[1] The terms of the discharge are given by Tabari, who also mentions nine of the Moslem chiefs employed to attest the receipts.

[2] One of the great channels drawn above Babylon from the Euphrates, which flows across the peninsula and falls into the Tigris. [3] P. 68.

the other to 'the Satraps and the people.' Towards the north and west, however, he employed his time more actively.

Persian detachments were posted in Mesopotamia and the outskirts of the desert at Anbâr, Ain Tamar, and other places, within easy distance of Hîra, and against these Khâlid now directed his steps. Leaving Cacâa, a warrior of the Beni Temîm, in command at Hîra, he laid siege to Anbâr, a fortress on the left bank of the Euphrates, some eighty miles above Babylon. The garrison, though galled by the Moslem archery, were secure behind their strong walls and the deep fosse by which it was surrounded, until Khâlid, by a stratagem, stormed an entrance. He slew the old and worn-out camels of his force, and casting their carcases into the ditch, thus forced his way across. The Persian governor sued for terms, and was allowed to retire.[1] Anbâr and the richly-irrigated neighbourhood of Felûgia[2] thus secured, Khâlid went on to Ain Tamar, on the desert border, three days west of Anbâr. The Persian governor Mihrân had there, besides the imperial troops, a great following of nomad tribes, and among these the Beni Taghlib, who (a strange coincidence) were under command of Ackka, Hodzeil, and other chiefs, the captains of the prophetess Sajâh when she invaded Yemâma.[3] These, advancing to the attack, assailed Khâlid as he approached the citadel; but he repulsed them easily, taking Ackka prisoner with his own hand. Mihrân, seeing

Khâlid takes Anbâr, Autumn, A.D. 633;

and Ain Tamar.

[1] His name was Shîrazâd, for we come now constantly on *Persian* names. The story is that the Moslems were told to shoot at the *eyes* of the garrison. And so a thousand of the enemy had their eyes transfixed; whence the siege was called 'The action of the Eyes.' I give the tradition as I find it—not pretending to offer an explanation—excepting that the same word stands for *eyes* and *fountains*.

[2] Still called by that name (pl. Felâlij), meaning the district about Anbâr irrigated by channels from the Euphrates. The army is said to have passed by the plain of *Kerbala*, which, however, is a good deal south of the position I assign to Ain Tamar ('The Fountain of Date-palms').

[3] See above, p. 31. The Beni Taghlib, it will be remembered, retired into Mesopotamia with Sajâh after her marriage with Mosailama.

the rout from the ramparts, fled, and left the garrison and the fugitives to defend themselves as best they could. Refused terms and reduced to straits, they surrendered at discretion. Khâlid, angry at the persistent opposition of the Mesopotamian tribes, and also at his loss in the field (for though the victory was easy, a Companion of note and a Citizen of Medîna were among the slain), was betrayed into an unwise severity which embittered the Christian Bedouins against him.[1] Ackka was beheaded in front of the city walls; the garrison was then led forth, every adult male put to death, and the women, with the children, made over to the soldiers or sold into slavery. In a cloister, hard by the church, were forty youths, who, in their terror, barred the door upon the enemy. When their retreat was forced open, they gave themselves up, declaring that they were students, receiving there instruction in the Gospel. Their lives were spared, and, being of a superior class, they were distributed among the leaders. It is hard to record the fate of these youthful scholars snatched from the Nestorian Church to be brought up as captives in the Moslem faith. But the fate, though sad, could hardly have been singular in the rough and sanguinary tide of Saracen invasion. Special prominence has, no doubt, been given to it here because Sirîn, one of the youths, became the father of Mohammed, the famous Moslem doctor of Bussora, and Noseir, another, the father of Mûsa, the not less famous conqueror of Spain.[2]

Khâlid's severity.

Forty Christian students taken captive.

[1] The Companion was Omeir. He had been one of the refugees to Abyssinia in the persecution of the Coreish, and was therefore a very early convert. A citizen (Ansâr) was also buried here; it is not distinctly stated, but I infer, that he too was killed in the action. This is the first mention of anyone killed on the Moslem side in the Irâc campaign, though, as said before, loss in the rank and file of the Bedouin levies was not of such importance as necessarily to require distinct notice.

[2] Another of these youths was Hamrân, who became the Mowla, or freedman, of Othman. When surprised in their cloister, they declared themselves to be 'hostages,' perhaps strangers from a distance, detained to complete their education there.

While these events transpired in Irâc, Iyâdh, who ought long since to have joined Khâlid, was battling unsuccessfully against his foes at Dûma. The Caliph, becoming anxious, sent Welîd ibn Ocba (who had been deputed by Khâlid to Medîna in charge of royal booty) to assist him.[1] The enemy had got possession of the roads, and Iyâdh could make no head against them. 'Counsel,' said Welîd, as he found him in this predicament, 'is ofttimes better than numbers: send a courier for Khâlid.' The message reached just after the fall of Ain Tamar; and Khâlid, with no enemy to detain him in the field, replied in martial verse:

Iyâdh hindered at Dûma.

Wait but a moment, my friend,
And a legion shall appear;
Cohort upon cohort following
With glittering sword and spear.

Starting at once with the flower of his force, he crossed the intervening desert, and made good his word.[2]

He was not a day too soon. Okeidar and Judi, the chiefs of Dûma, were supported by the Beni Kelb, a tribe which pastured its flocks in the neighbourhood, and also by the Beni Bahra, from the desert west of the Euphrates; and now the Beni Ghassân were pouring down from the north, under Jabala, the Christian prince of Bostra.[3] The position of Iyâdh, thus beset, had been growing day by day more critical. The advent of Khâlid changed the scene at once. His very name was a tower of strength. Okeidar had already felt his prowess, having several years before been taken by him a prisoner to Mahomet at Medîna. Hearing

Dûma stormed by Khâlid. Rajab, A.H. XII. October, A.D. 633.

[1] Welîd was the son of that Ocba who had been put to death by Mahomet after the battle of Bedr (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 239). We shall hear more of him by and by.

[2] The distance must have been over 300 miles, besides the detour rendered necessary by the intervening desert (the *Nefûd* of red sand, see Lady Blount's *Pilgrimage to Nejd*); and must have taken, C. de Perceval says, not less than ten days; with any other than Khâlid, I should have said a good deal more.

[3] Jabala VI. See *Life of Mahomet*, vol. i. p. clxxxix.

now that his old enemy was advancing from the east, he was much afraid; and, failing to persuade his comrades to offer terms, he hastened forward by himself, with the view of surrendering; but Khâlid, being apprised of his approach, sent out to take him prisoner, and he was instantly beheaded.[1] Then, instructing Iyâdh to engage the Syrian troops on the farther side of Dûma, Khâlid himself attacked the enemy on the nearer, and utterly routed them, taking prisoner Judi and the Kelbite leader. The discomfited troops fled back in confusion to the fort, and when that was full, the gates were closed. Iyâdh was also on his side victorious, but Jabala effected his escape to Syria. Then the sword was drawn against the helpless crowd hemmed in between the two forces. The Beni Kelb were spared; for Acra, a Bedouin chief, had (much to Khâlid's displeasure) given them quarter as a confederate tribe[2]; but Judi was beheaded, and all the rank and file that vainly struggled round the city walls. Even to those within, the ramparts were of small avail; the gate was battered down, and the crowded inmates put promiscuously to the sword. The women were sold to the highest bidder; and the most beautiful, the unfortunate Judi's daughter, bought by Khâlid for his harem. Thus solacing himself for a little while at Dûma, the conqueror sent Acra with the main body back to Hîra. There they were received with outward demonstrations of joy; for the citizens, with timbrels, music, and cymbals, went forth, headed by Cacâa, to meet the returning army.[3]

[1] So the ordinary narrative. But there is another account that Oksidar was sent a prisoner to Medîna; and being subsequently released by Omar, settled near Ain Tamar, at a place which, in memory of his former home, he named *Dûma*. The name *may* have given rise to the tradition; though, on the other hand, the execution of Oksidar is in keeping with Khâlid's sanguinary character. For his first encounter with Khalid, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. 458.

[2] Acra was chief of the Beni Temîm, old allies of the Beni Kelb, who otherwise would have shared the common fate.

[3] The demonstration was probably forced. The citizens, we are told,

Various expeditions in Irâc. Shâban, A.H. XII. November, A.D. 633.

But all was not going on smoothly in Mesopotamia. The absence of Khâlid and great part of his force encouraged the Persians and their Arab allies—specially the Beni Taghlib, smarting under the execution of Ackka—to resume offensive operations. Cacâa, though on the alert, was able, with the diminished means at his disposal, to do no more than guard the frontier and protect Anbâr from a threatened inroad. At this news, Khâlid hastened back; and, having installed Iyâdh in the government of Hîra, despatched Cacâa across the Euphrates against the Persians, while he himself appointed a rendezvous at Ain Tamar to attack the Arabs, for he had vowed that he would visit the Beni Taghlib in their homes, and crush the viper in its nest. In Mesopotamia the Persians were routed and their leaders killed; while on the western border a series of brilliant and well-planned night attacks succeeded again and again in surprising the Arabs as they slept secure in their desert homes, where they were cut to pieces, and their families carried away into dishonour and captivity. Thus Khâlid fulfilled his vow. Multitudes of women, many of noble birth, were distributed among the army. A portion of these, with a rich booty, were sent to Medîna; and one, the daughter of Bodeir, chief of the Beni Taghlib, killed in the slaughter, was purchased by Aly, and bore him a son and daughter.[1] For the time, the Bedouin confederacy was dispersed.

murmured secretly,—'We thought that they had passed by, like other Arab raiders; their return is the breaking out of a fresh calamity;' and so, before long, they found it.

[1] The girl's name was Sahba. Aly had recently received into his harem another maiden taken captive at Yemâma; being of the Beni Hanifa, the son, Mohammed, whom she bore to him, was called *the Hanifite*. Thus, though he sat inactive at home, Aly took his full share of the captive ladies. He also married in this year Omâma, a granddaughter of the Prophet (being a child of Abul Aâs and Zeinab) and niece of his deceased wife Fâtima.

I have noticed these expeditions very briefly, as the similarity of detail becomes tedious. The Persian generals Zermihr and Rozaba, were attacked by Cacâa and slain before they could form a junction with the Beni Taghlib,

Battle of Firâdh; Persians, Romans, and Bedouins defeated. Dzul Cada 15, A.H. XII. Jan. 21, A.D. 634.

Driving thus the enemy before him, Khâlid came upon the Euphrates, and, crossing it, reached Firâdh, so far advanced as to touch the frontier, within sight of a Roman post. There he rested his army on the river bank during the fast of Ramadhan, and for some weeks after.[1] The Syrian garrison on the western shore, uneasy at the prolonged and threatening encampment, made common cause with the neighbouring Persian outposts, and, joined as well from the desert by Bedouin horse, advanced an imposing force to the river. They challenged Khâlid to cross and give them battle. But the wary general bade them rather cross over to his side, which they did. A long and severe conflict ensued. The Moslems were victorious, and the cavalry pursuing the fugitives, cut to pieces an incredible multitude.[2]

Khâlid's incognito pilgrimage. Dzul Hijj, A.H. XII. February, A.D. 634.

For the moment opposition was crushed both on the part of the Bedouins and the Persian troops. Khâlid would willingly have attacked Medâin, but the cautious policy of Abu Bekr withheld him. Besides the districts secured by treaty with the great landlords of the lower delta, Khâlid had now extended his rule on both sides of the Euphrates

but the fugitives joined the Bedouin camp at Medeya in the desert. Thereupon, Khâlid organised three parties to converge at a set time by night upon the Arab encampment, which was surprised, and left covered with the dead, 'like a field of slaughtered sheep.' The chief, Hodzeil, escaped.

Among the slain were two Bedouin chiefs who, having embraced Islam, held an amnesty from the Caliph. Omar took the occasion again to blame Khâlid for his indiscriminating vengeance; but Abu Bekr, as before, justified him; 'for those,' he said, 'who dwell in the encampment of an enemy must take their chance with him.' As, however, they were both said to have called aloud the Moslem shibboleth, their families were set free and taken care of, and blood-money paid. Omar treasured up these things against Khâlid.

The similar stratagem of a convergent night attack was repeatedly resorted to at Thinia, Zomeil, and Bishr, not a soul escaping the sword but the women and children. Horcus, a famous chief of the desert, was surprised and slain while drinking his last draught of wine with his daughters, who were carried away captive. The subject is a favourite one, and the bacchanalian verses sung by Horcus in his last cups, with a swan-like anticipation of impending fate, are assigned to several different occasions.

[1] Ramadhan fell in December, A.D. 633.

[2] No details are given of this great battle, excepting the fabulous number of 100,000 slain.

above Anbâr, and no enemy was anywhere in sight.[1] Things seeming thus to be quiet, Khâlid formed the singular resolve—the sacred month having now come round—of making the pilgrimage incognito, unknown even to his royal master. So, having recruited his army for ten days on the well-fought field of Firâdh, he gave orders to march slowly and by easy stages back to Hîra. Then, making as though he remained behind to bring up the rear-guard, he set out secretly with a small escort on his pious errand. Without a guide, he traversed the devious desert route with marvellous sagacity and speed. Having accomplished the rites of pilgrimage, he retraced his steps with like despatch, and entered Hîra just as the rear-guard from Firâdh was marching in. So well had he kept his secret, that the army thought he had been all the while at Firâdh, and had been journeying slowly back. Even Abu Bekr, who himself presided at the pilgrimage, was unaware of the presence of his great general. When, after some time, the surreptitious visit came to his knowledge, he was much displeased. But the action which he took in consequence belongs to the succeeding year.[2]

[1] In the troublous times that followed, almost all the country rose and committed acts of disloyalty which, with one or two exceptions, cancelled the treaties and engagements now entered into by Khâlid with the Dihcâns.

[2] According to some traditions, Abu Bekr deputed Omar to preside at the pilgrimage this year. But the general opinion is that Abu Bekr did so himself, leaving Othmân during his absence in charge of Medîna. This is the more likely, as, owing to the troubled state of the peninsula, he had been unable to go on pilgrimage the previous year.

CHAPTER XI.

CAMPAIGN IN SYRIA.—BATTLE OF WACUSA ON THE YERMUK.

A.H. XIII. A.D. 634.

Khâlid ibn Saîd posted on the Syrian border. A.H. XII. A.D. 633.

THE campaign in Syria opened under the auspices of a very different Khâlid, of the Omeyyad clan,—Khâlid ibn Saîd. Having been one of the earliest converts, and amongst those driven for refuge to Abyssinia, he held a high place amongst the confessors of Islam. He had been appointed by Mahomet to a command in the south, and though forced to retreat in the troubles which ensued on the Prophet's death, had achieved some renown in wresting from Mádekerib's hands the famous sword Samsât.[1] Returning from thence, he urged his claim to a fresh command; and Abu Bekr, yielding to his importunity, and against the wish of Omar, posted him at Tayma, on the Syrian border, there to rally the friendly tribes, but, unless attacked, to take no offensive step. Tidings of the movement alarmed the Romans in that quarter, who thereupon, summoning the Ghassân and other Syrian tribes, assembled a large force to protect the border. Khâlid, on this, obtained permission to advance, but cautiously, and so as to leave no enemy in his rear. As he advanced, the Syrians retired; and, marching onwards, he discomfited a Roman column on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea.[2] Finding himself in a position so advanced, and the country in front roused by the inroad, Khâlid urgently

Discomfits a Roman column.

[1] See above, p. 53.

[2] Near to Castal (which C. de Perceval makes Callirhoe) and towards Abila, but probably not so far north; the advance on Syria being made (as always) on the east of the Dead Sea.

demanded reinforcements from Medîna. The troops were just then returning from Yemen; and so Ikrima, with Dzul Kelâa, a loyal Himyarite chief, followed by his clan, being the first to appear, were despatched to the north in haste.[1]

Ikrima sent to his support;

Two other captains of note were also deputed for the support of Khâlid; these were Amru and Welîd, who had a joint command over the Beni Codhâa, in the tract of country between Tayma and the Red Sea. Since the reduction of Dûma, this tract was now comparatively quiet, and Abu Bekr gave them the option either of remaining where they were, or engaging in a work 'better for them, both in this present life, and in that which is to come.' Amru, although he had, even before his deputation to Omân, had the promise from the Prophet of this district, made answer: 'Thy servant is but an arrow in the quiver of Islam, and thou the Archer. It is for thee to pick out the fittest shaft, and whithersoever thou wilt discharge it.' So they were despatched, Welîd to join Khâlid ibn Saîd, and Amru by Ayla to the south of the Holy Land.[2]

also Amru and Welîd. January, A.D. 634.

Emboldened by these reinforcements, Khâlid hastened forward to gain the first laurels of the campaign; and, forgetful of his master's injunctions, suffered himself to be decoyed by the Roman general Bahân towards Damascus,

Khâlid ibn Saîd defeated at Marj al Soffar.

[1] Dzul Kelâa, with his immediate clan, remained firm in the rebellion of Yemen, and aided Ikrima in its suppression: see above, p. 54. Ikrima's column was called 'the brigade of substitutes,' because on his return from the long campaign in the south, his soldiers were allowed furlough to their homes, on condition of their giving substitutes for the new expedition in the north.

[2] Amru is said to have had the promise of the command over the tribes of Odzra and Sâd-Hodzeim (branches of the Beni Codhâa) from Mahomet when he deputed him to Omân, and Abu Bekr fulfilled the promise. His present mission must have been subsequent to the affair at Dûma, as Welîd, on his return to Medîna from Irâc, was sent to help Iyâdh at Dûma. This further appears from the notice that Welîd, on joining the Syrian force, left as his *locum tenens* over the Beni Codhâa, Imral Cays 'from Dûma'; implying that Dûma was by this time a Mahometan possession.

Moharram, A.H. XIII. March, A.D. 634.

away from his supports. Unprotected behind, the enemy closed in upon his rear, and cut off his retreat. He was routed at Marj al Soffar, to the east of the Sea of Tiberias; his son was slain, and, losing heart, he fled, leaving his camp in the enemy's hands, and Ikrima to retrieve the disaster. That able general rallied the retreating force, and with a sufficient remnant, including the brave Himyarite band under Dzul Kelâa, took up a strong position on the frontier, until help should come. Khâlid continued his flight, but was stayed at Wady al Cora.—'By my life!' wrote the indignant Caliph, 'thou shalt come no further; thou pratest bravely when secure, but in battle thou art a coward. I have no patience with thee!' And he said to those about him: 'Truly Aly and Omar knew the man better than I. Had I listened to them, this mishap had not been.' We hear no more of Khâlid ibn Saîd.[1]

Reinforcements despatched to Syria. Beginning of A.H. XIII. Spring, A.D. 634.

In the present emergency, it was fortunate for Abu Bekr that the south of the peninsula was by this time entirely pacified. He was able, therefore, as the columns returned from thence, to hurry them off to Syria, there to retrieve the fortunes of Islam. Four battalions were now sent forward. First, *Shorahbîl*, returning at that moment from Irâc, was appointed to supersede Welîd, who shared in the

[1] Marj al Soffar is to the north of the Yermûk on the road to Damascus, and is frequently mentioned in the subsequent campaign. It was not far from Jâbia in the Jaulân (Gaulonitis) which became the grand rendezvous for the Moslem armies, and the point of departure both for northern Syria and Palestine. The journey from Medîna to Syria was always, as now, by the country to the east of the Dead Sea, very much what is the present pilgrim route from Damascus to Mecca.

Some accounts say that Khâlid himself was killed in the engagement, which, according to the wont of Saracen defeats, is slurred over with a few unsatisfactory and garbled words. According to other traditions, Khâlid was degraded because, in returning from Yemen, he delayed to swear allegiance to Abu Bekr, and abused Aly and Othmân for allowing the government to pass out of the house of Abd Menâf. This is altogether improbable. The account in the text is the received one and also the most consistent. But the dates are all uncertain, for none are reliable till after the battle of Ajnadein.

disgrace of Khâlid's defeat.[1] Rallying the scattered fragments of the discomfited force, he carried the greater part back again to the front, and there took up a position in advance of Ikrima. Then followed *Yezîd*, son of Abu Sofiân, with a great levy from Mecca, including many famous chiefs of the Coreish, roused by the Caliph's call and the stirring news from Syria. His brother, Muâvia, shortly after joined him, bringing up the remaining fragments of the runaway army. *Abu Obeida*, already known to the reader as a trusted Companion of the Prophet, led a third column, and posted himself near to *Amru*, who commanded the fourth brigade in the Wady Araba, to the west of the others. Many of the new troops, especially the levies from the south, travelled, after the Bedouin fashion, with their families, ready to settle house and home in the north; for the marvellous success of the army in Irâc suggested the still more inviting prospect of establishing themselves in the Land of Promise, flowing with milk and honey.[2]

Composition of the Syrian force.

This force was altogether different in composition from the army of Irâc. That in the main consisted of Bedouins, who flocked in tribes or clans to the banners of Mothanna and Khâlid; the men of Mecca and Medîna were as yet in Irâc comparatively few, for they had returned in great numbers to their homes after the battle of Yemâma. In the Syrian army, on the contrary, there are reckoned at least a thousand *Companions*—men who had seen and conversed with the Prophet; and of these no fewer than one hundred of the famous Three Hundred of Bedr. They enrolled themselves at pleasure under whichever chief they chose; but, once enrolled, they yielded to their leader an

[1] Shorahbîl had fought under the great Khâlid at Yemâma, and thence accompanied him to Irâc. Deputed at this crisis to Medîna with despatches or booty, he there obtained this command.

[2] The Scriptural expressions of 'the Promised Land,' 'the Land of Blessing,' &c., are applied in the Corân to Palestine; and it remained long the most coveted destination of the Bedouin levies.

implicit obedience; while he, on his part, consulted their views and wishes, not only in the set council of war, but generally on all occasions of importance. Sheikhs of renown, such as Abu Sofiân and Soheil, who but a few years before, had wielded at will the whole power of Mecca, and haughty high-born chieftains of Nejd and Yemen, now joined with alacrity and zeal the column of anyone, however young and inferior, into whose hands the Caliph was minded to present a banner of command. And the whole force, thus formed in separate detachments, held itself at the absolute disposal of the Commander of the Faithful.

Abu Bekr addresses the columns as they leave Medîna.

Abu Bekr was duly sensible of the gravity of the enterprise on which he now embarked—nothing short, in fact, of measuring swords with the Kaiser. He had thrown down the gauntlet, and in fact was waging war, at one and the same time, with the potentates of the East and of the West. The brigades for this service were pitched one after another on the outlying field of Jorf; and, as each was ready to march, the Caliph walked a little distance (as nearly two years before he had done with Osâma) by the side of the mounted leader, and gave him thus his farewell commands. 'Profession,' he would say, 'is naught without faith. The merit of a work dependeth on the purpose of the worker. The reward set forth in the Book of the Lord for such as fight in His ways, is great. Set this ever before thee and before thy men. But when thou haranguest them, be brief, for in the multitude of words the foremost word is lost in the hindermost. So striving, ye will obtain the prize, riches and glory in the present life, and in the life to come salvation.' Then saying 'Fare ye well,' he would retrace his steps and return to his simple home.

Advance of the four divisions.

The four battalions now gathered on the Syrian border numbered 30,000, besides the reserve of 6,000 under Ikrima.[1] In their first advance these columns met with

[1] The strength of the four columns is usually given as 27,000, some authorities

little to oppose them. Abu Obeida marched through the Belcâa. The Arab settlement at Maâb[1] resisted, but, after an unsuccessful skirmish, submitted to his terms; and he then marched on to Jâbia. From the south of Palestine a Roman force advanced on the Araba below the Dead Sea; but it was easily discomfited by Yezîd, who pursued it to Dâthin, and slew the patrician in command.[2] The four divisions eventually took up ground in a sort of échelon, threatening the chief garrisons in the south of Syria. Abu Obeida, advancing towards Damascus, held a position the furthest east, near to Ikrima and the scene of the recent disaster. Next came Shorahbîl, overawing the Ghôr, or depressed valley of the Jordan and Tiberias. Yezîd in the Belcâa, threatened Bostra; and Amru, in lower Palestine, Hebron. Each of these, at last, found himself confronted by a Roman force.

Moharram, A.H. XIII. March, A.D. 634.

Heraclius now, at last, was thoroughly aroused. It was but a few years before that he had gloriously repulsed the Chosroes; but after that he had relapsed into the inactivity of earlier years. Tidings of the invasion—a fresh irruption, as it would seem, of barbarians from the south instead of from the north—awakened him from his lethargy. Repairing to Hims, he gathered together an immense force, and sent it, in separate divisions, to stem the advancing tide. The largest of these, numbering (tradition tells us) 90,000 men, was commanded by his brother Theodoric.[3]

Heraclius sends four battalions to oppose them.

adding 3,000 rallied from Khâlid's force, and some not. Tradition represents Abu Bekr as sending them forth each to reduce a given district in Syria—Abu Obeida, Hims; Yezîd, Damascus; Shorahbîl, the Jordan; Amru, Palestine. A palpable anticipation. Abu Bekr's vision was yet hounded by the Roman army, and the issue doubtful.

[1] Ar, or Rabbah of Moab.

[2] The Dothan of Joseph's story is placed by Robinson north of Nablûs, near the plain of Megiddo. If this be the same, Yezîd must have penetrated into the centre of Palestine, which at this early period of the campaign is not likely. But the whole account is very brief and confused. It seems, also, improbable that Abu Obeida should have advanced quite so far as Jâbia, while as yet the Roman battalions dominated the country north of the Yermûk.

[3] The names of the Roman commanders are given as Jâreja (George?),

The Moslems were alarmed at the formidable array, and they consulted how to meet it. Amru urged his brother generals to gather all into one body.—'For how,' he sent to say, 'can our scanty numbers, divided and apart, encounter these mighty hosts?' To this they agreed, and Abu Bekr, who had constant tidings of their progress, was of the same mind. 'Draw ye all together,' was his command, 'by the banks of the Yermûk. Ye are the Lord's host, and shall surely put the enemy to flight. Such as you shall not be discomfited by reason of the fewness of your numbers. Tens of thousands are smitten in battle because of their sins. Wherefore, do ye eschew sin. Let every man stand close by his fellow. So shall the Lord give you the victory.'

The Saracen generals resolve to draw together.

Acting on this counsel, the four columns concentrated to the south of the Yermûk, near where it was crossed by the military road from Damascus. The Romans, suiting their tactics to the change, also drew together, and, under command of Theodoric, pitched their camp on the northern bank of the river. The place was singular. The Yermûk, taking its rise in the high lands of the Haurân, and fed by many affluents, is a large and swift stream. In its lower course it runs, far below the level of the plain, in a deep and rugged gorge, through which its waters, rapidly descending to the Ghôr, fall into the Jordan at Gadara, below the Lake of Galilee. The battle-ground was probably 30 or 40 miles above the junction. Here the stream, fetching a compass, formed on the northern bank a great plain,—the plain of WACÛSA, bounded on three sides by a sheer precipice. The remaining side was hemmed in by a ravine which nearly closed the circuit. A narrow neck was left

Romans and Moslems face each other at *Wacûsa* on the Yermûk. Safar, A.H. XIII. April, A.D. 634.

Cayear ibn Nestûs, Darâckis, and Tadzâric (Theodoric). Tradition pretends that Heraclius, half persuaded of the truth of Islam, was desirous to cede to the Moslems the plain of Syria up to the mountains of Asia Minor, but was hindered by the perversity of his grandees.

for entrance, across which the military road passing, formed the key of the position. The Romans were tempted by the wide expanse of level ground, which offered room for their great camp, and was secure on every side. Advancing, therefore, from the north, they entered this plain, and spread themselves out upon it. Thereupon the Moslems crossed the river, and encamped also on the northern bank, upon another plain adjoining the neck; thus they commanded the road, and threatened the exit of the enemy. Amru, seeing this, rejoiced and said: 'Be of good cheer, my friends; the Romans are shut in, and few that are shut in escape.'[1] A desultory warfare ensued without any definite result. The Romans often formed up in force, and as often were driven back; but the ravine was to them a strong protection, and the Arabs gained no material advantage. In such indecisive skirmishing two months passed away, and the armies remained still facing one another.[2]

Rabi I. and II., May and June.

[1] The way out, however, could have been only partially closed, for reinforcements reached the Romans without hindrance. The ravine was probably passable at some points, though, on the whole, a sufficient defence against the Arabs.

[2] The country is well described by Laurence Oliphant in his *Land of Gilead*, and the picture at p. 87 gives an admirable idea of the gorge surrounding our battlefield. 'The Yermûk,' he says, 'at this point is just sinking below the level of the plain through which it has been meandering, and in the course of the next mile plunges down, a series of cascades, into the stupendous gorges through which it winds, until it ultimately falls into the Jordan below Gadara.' The grand old military road, still bearing traces of wheeled carriages, bifurcates five and twenty miles south of Damascus. The right branch leads S.W. to Palestine, crossing the Yermûk at Gadara; the other continues to run south towards Jerash and Bostra, and so onward till it is lost in the Hajj or pilgrim-route into Arabia. The latter was the road always traversed by the Saracen armies as they marched into Syria and Palestine; and I assume that the battle was fought at a point some 30 miles east of Gadara where this road crosses the Yermûk. The same road northward leads to Jâbia (Tell Jâbieh); and Jâbieh became the grand base of operations both for Syria and for Palestine; for Palestine was never approached from Arabia but by this circuitous route. The Arabs, we are told, do not use the Roman road, because probably it is in so rugged and ruinous a condition. But they always use the bridges when passable; and Mr. Oliphant tells us of an 'old Roman bridge of nine arches, one of which has fallen and has not been repaired,' over the Yermûk in this vicinity, p. 87. The researches now being prosecuted to the east of the Jordan may throw

Khâlid transferred to Syria.

Abu Bekr became anxious at the delay, and at the urgent appeals that came to him for reinforcements. It was not so much the poverty of numbers, as the lack of fire and military genius that disquieted him. Abu Obeida was mild and kindly even to timidity; Amru an able counsellor, but lacking military dash. The mettle of none of the generals had yet been fully tested; and their independence one of another, in the absence of a general-in-chief, while it gave opportunity to each, had a paralysing effect on all. When, therefore, the cry reached Medîna for help, the Caliph exclaimed: 'Khâlid, son of Welîd, is the man for this! By him, with the help of the Lord, shall the machinations of Satan and the Romans be overthrown.' The stealthy pilgrimage of Khâlid had come to his knowledge, and he now marked his displeasure by indirectly hinting at it in the order for his deputation to Syria, which ran as follows: 'Depart and join thyself unto the armies of the Faithful on the Yermûk, for they are downcast and forlorn. But beware that thou return not again to do what thou hast done. The Lord helping, thy removal shall not dishearten thy followers in Irâc. Go forward then, Father of Suleimân, high resolve and success attend thee! Fill up the measure of the Lord's benefits upon mankind, and He shall fulfil the same unto thee. Have a care lest the world and the flesh ensnare thee, so that thou stumble and thy works perish. The Lord doth recompense!'[1]

Khâlid, with reinforcements from Irâc, sets out for Syria.

This order at the first disconcerted Khâlid. He set it down to Omar, who, envying him the conquest of Irâc, would thus, on the eve of accomplishment, snatch it from his hand. There was too much reason for the fear; but

farther light on this great battlefield, the site of which it may be possible yet to identify.

[1] Some authorities represent the transfer as a punishment for the surreptitious visit to Mecca; but this is at variance with the terms of the order, as well as opposed to the whole tenor of Abu Bekr's forbearing treatment of Khâlid.

had Abu Bekr lived, it would have been otherwise, for his order continued thus:—'Take with thee half the army, and leave Mothanna half. When the Lord shall have given thee victory in Syria, then thou shalt return with the troops to thy command in Irâc.' Reconciled by this assurance, and loyal to his chief, Khâlid set to work at once, and began by selecting the 'Companions' and flower of the force to accompany him. Mothanna insisted that the division should be equal both in kind and number, and protested that he would not be responsible for the safety of Irâc unless it was effected fairly. He was conciliated by getting back a goodly portion of the veterans. The strength of either moiety is put at 9,000.[1] The spring was far advanced when Khâlid marched. Mothanna accompanied him to the border of the desert, and, taking a last farewell of the great general whom he had served so loyally, retraced his steps to Hîra.

Safar, A.H. XIII. April, A.D. 634.

The Syrian desert lay between Khâlid and his new sphere of action. He could not take the northern route, because of hostile tribes and Roman garrisons; therefore, turning south by Ain Tamar, he crossed the second time the Nefûd—that strange and tumbled red sea of sand—to the north of the mountains of the Beni Tay, and halted at Dûma.[2] Thence he took the direct road to Syria, along the Wady

Khâlid marches across the Syrian desert;

[1] The numbers of Khâlid's column are variously stated at 9,000 and 6,000; and again as low as 800, 600, and 500. But the smaller numbers are probably intended to indicate only that part of his force which formed the flying column in his adventurous march across the desert: the rest, I assume, followed more leisurely and by an easier route. In point of fact, 6,000 returned the following year to Irâc, though they had been thinned by the Syrian campaign.

Some put the march of Khâlid a month earlier. Ibn Ishâc says that before leaving, Khâlid despatched the sick and infirm, with the women and children, to Medîna, with the last consignment of royal prize, as if he apprehended insecurity during his absence.

[2] The great sea of red sand has been spiritedly described by Lady Anne Blount in her *Pilgrimage to Nejd*; her route (reversed) was the same as Khâlid's, from Irâc as far as Corâcar, only her circuit led her farther south to Hâil, and nearer the mountain range of Ajâ and Selma.

Sirhân; and surprising Corâcar, a settlement of the Beni Kelb lying half way, he plundered it. Keeping the same route, he would in a few days have reached Bostra. But he feared the Roman garrisons, lest they should check him on that road, and hinder his junction with the Moslem army. He formed, therefore, the bold design of striking right across the Syrian desert to the north, emerging at Tadmor, and so turning the Roman flank. A council of war was held, and a Bedouin, well versed in the desert, set before them. 'There is but one track,' said the guide, 'a track so bare, and for five days so waterless, that even single horsemen shun it, lest they perish by the way.' 'By the same way shall we go,' was Khâlid's prompt resolve; and when expostulated with on the wild and perilous attempt, he answered that, with Divine aid and firm resolve, nothing was wild and nothing perilous. The words fired his followers with the same adventurous zeal, and the project was by acclamation carried. 'Do this then,' said the guide, 'if ye be bent upon the enterprise. Gather as many camels as ye can; make them thirsty by withholding water for a while; then let them drink plentifully, and again a second time; afterwards, bind their ears and slit their lips so that they ruminate not. So haply may your water last.' At each stage across the wilderness, ten such camels were slain for every troop of a hundred lances. The water drawn from them was mixed with milk for the horses. The men were given but a single draught each day. On the fifth day a shudder crept over the host. The supply was at an end. They had reached the neighbourhood, marked by two hills on the right hand and on the left, where water should have been, but the signs were wanting, and the guide was at fault. After casting anxiously about in all directions, he cried in despair—'Search for the bramble bush; the bramble should be here; if ye find it not, we are lost.' So they searched all around. At last they came upon a half-concealed root, and raising the Takbîr, shouted 'Great

is the Lord!' Rushing to the spot, they dug down into the ground, and found a plentiful supply of water.[1]

They were now on the Syrian side of the desert, about a hundred miles to the east of Damascus. Early next morning, Khâlid fell on the astonished tribes in the neighbourhood, scattering terror all around, and securing submission either willingly or by the sword. Tadmor, after a slight resistance, yielded. Then fetching a circuit, he skirted the Haurân within sight of Damascus, and emerged at Adzraât. Having achieved this marvellous journey in the course of a few weeks, and reopened communications with the south, he sent tidings to Abu Bekr of his safety, with the Fifth of the spoil he had taken by the way. He was now close to the combined army of the Moslems, which still lay inactive on the Yermûk; and he effected a junction with them in the month of June, or perhaps July.[2]

and effects a junction with the Syrian army. Rabî II. or Jumâd I. June or July.

[1] Such is the received account of this extraordinary march, the memory of which is also preserved in contemporary verse. Ibn Ishâc speaks of *twenty* camels, which would have gone but a little way. Other accounts give the number of camels at so many per hundred lances, without mentioning the strength of the column. As before explained, Khâlid probably took the perilous route with only the lighter part of his force, leaving the bulky and heavy portion to follow by the ordinary road, along the Wady Sirhân, after he had cleared the Bostra approach. The lips of the camels were slit or cut off (according to other accounts bound up) to prevent their ruminating and the consequent digestion and assimilation of the water in their stomachs.

[2] They emerged at Suwâ near Tadmor, and forthwith fell upon the Beni Bahra, a Christian tribe, a portion of which was engaged in the defence of Dûma the year before. Here again we have the bacchanalian death-song of Horcûs mentioned before. We must receive the account of Khâlid's circuit, even after the passage of the desert, with some reserve. He is said to have plundered Cariatein and Huwarein on the way from Tadmor; to have made terms with the Beni Codhâa at Cussum; then to have passed over the 'Mount of the Eagle' (so called from his halting on it with the Prophet's black flag), within sight of Damascus; to have plundered Marj Râhat, and a convent in the *Ghûta* or plain of Damascus, killing the men and taking the females prisoners; and so on to Bostra, which, after some opposition, came to terms. If this be all true, he may have at Bostra formed a junction with the body of his column left behind at Corâcar. But it is all very vague, and with a dash of the marvellous.

Ibn Ishâc gives a somewhat different account. He mixes up former victories (*e.g.* the capture of the forty Christian youths, of Aly's slave-girl, &c.) with this campaign; and he makes the storming of Bostra to follow the

The two armies compared.

Fresh reinforcements from the Emperor, under the renowned Armenian general Bahân (the same who discomfited the other Khâlid), had just arrived and raised the flagging spirit of the Romans. Their army, we are told, numbered 240,000 men, of whom a great body are stigmatised as felon-prisoners released for the occasion, and others are said (like those of the Persians) to have been chained together that they might not run away, or in token that they were bound to die. The idea, no doubt, is fanciful and cast in the contemptuous style of Mussulman tradition. But so much we may readily accept, that the army with which Heraclius sought to stay the tide of Saracen invasion, must needs have been very large.[1] We may also believe that though devoid of union, loyalty, and valour, it was well appointed, and elated by its achievements in the Persian war, of which many veterans were still present in the ranks. In discipline and combined movement, and in the weight and style of his equipment, the Roman, no doubt, surpassed the Arab. But the armament of the Roman did not so greatly excel as to give him a material advantage. It had no analogy, for example, with the superiority which in these days crushes the barbarian before the sanguinary appliances of modern art and science. It is strange to reflect how a single Gatling might have changed the day and driven Islam back to wither and die in the land of its birth. On the other hand, the Bedouin horse excelled in celerity and dash. Their charge, if light, was galling, and so rapidly delivered that, before the surprise was recovered from, the enemy might be out of sight. The Romans, it is true, had themselves Bedouin auxiliaries, as numerous,

junction with Abu Obeida. I find no authority whatever for the romance of the taking of Bostra as given by Ockley and followed by Gibbon.

[1] In the silence of Byzantine chroniclers we must make the best of the figures. 80,000 were 'prisoners,' either simply so or in chains; 40,000 were 'chained together to fight to the death;' 40,000 were 'tied by their turbans;' and 80,000 free and unencumbered. In the Armenian general *Bahân* we recognise the Βάαν of Theophanes; a rare (one might say a unique) coincidence.

perhaps, as the whole Moslem army. But the spirit of the two was widely different. The fealty of the Syrian Arab was lax and loose. Christian in name, the yoke of his faith sat (as it still sits) lightly on him. Indeed, throughout the empire, Christianity was eaten up of strife and rancour. With Bahân came a troop of monks and bishops, who, bearing banners, waving aloft their golden crosses, and shouting that the faith was in jeopardy, sought thus to rouse the passion of the army. But the passion roused was too often the scowl of hatred. Bitter schisms rent the Church, and the cry of the Orthodox for help would strike a far different chord than that of sympathy in the Eutychian and Nestorian breast. Lastly, the social and ancestral associations of the Syrian Bedouin, while alien from his Byzantine masters, were in full accord with his brethren from Arabia; and of this instinctive feeling, the invaders knew well how to take advantage. With these lukewarm and disunited multitudes, compare now the Moslem force in its virgin vigour, bound together as one man, and fired with a wild fanatical zeal to 'fight in the ways of the Lord,' and so win at once heavenly merit and worldly fortune;—their prize, the spoil of the enemy, and the fair maidens of Syria ravished from their homes; or, should they fall in battle, the reward of the martyr, heaven opened and beautiful virgins, black-eyed Houries, beckoning, with all the wanton graces of paradise, to their warm embrace.[1] Of warriors nerved by this strange combination of earth and heaven, of the flesh and of the spirit, of the incentives both of faith and rapine, of fanatical devotion to the Prophet and deathless passion for the sex, ten might chase a hundred half-hearted Romans. The forty thousand Moslems were stronger far than the two hundred and forty thousand of the enemy.

[1] The imagination of the crusading army was inflamed by tales and visions of the dying soldiers each tended by two black-eyed girls of Paradise, who, wiping the sweat and dust of battle from the face of their spouse, welcomed and clasped him in their fond embrace.

The Moslems paralysed by separate commands.

The Roman army, swollen by the battalions of Bahân, and spreading over the plain, began to overlap the Moslems and force them back into a straitened place. But with Khâlid's energy, things soon began to mend. In a series of encounters, the enemy, being worsted, retired behind the intrenched ravine. But in other ways the situation remained the same. The five battalions of the Moslem host were separately pitched; the conduct of public prayer (mark of supreme command) was separate in each; the attacks were separately made; and so, from want of combination, they failed in delivering a decisive blow. The issue hung fire. A month passed, and Khâlid became impatient. To secure success, command must be vested in a single hand. He saw the fault, and set himself to remedy it.

Khâlid obtains supreme command for a day.

Opportunity soon offered. Unusual preparation and busy movement on the Roman side led to a council of the Moslem chiefs, and Khâlid laid his views before them. The Caliph, it was true, had given to each a separate and distinct command to meet the separate Roman armies. But the field had changed, and Abu Bekr would surely now approve the assumption of absolute command by a single general. The merit in the Caliph's eyes would be the same for all; the merit in the sight of the Lord, the same. 'Come now,' he added, to disarm their jealousy, 'and we shall vary the supreme command, each taking it in succession for the day, and, if ye will, let the first be mine.' The success of Khâlid in Irâc added weight to his words. The proposal thus adroitly made was unanimously agreed to. The Chiefs expected that, when the occasion passed, the old system would be reverted to. But the change, once made, stood good; and the supreme command in Syria was thenceforward vested in a single hand.[1]

[1] It is doubtful whether Abu Bekr's commission to Khâlid on his transfer did not at the same time nominate him to the supreme command of the Syrian

A Roman general gained over by Khâlid.

Meanwhile Khâlid had sown dissension in the enemy's camp, and gained over at least one of their leading officers. The facts are obscure, and the episode, as told by tradition, strange. But so much appears, that a general, Jâreja by name, perhaps of Arab blood and imbued with Bedouin sympathies, was persuaded by Khâlid to embrace his cause, and to promise that, at the decisive moment, he would leave the Roman and join the Moslem side.[1]

Moslem army arranged in battalions.

The powers conferred on Khâlid were soon put to the test, and that to good purpose. His first care was to organise the army as a whole. 'The Romans,' he said, 'are a vast and imposing multitude, and we but few to look at. Now no disposition swelleth numbers to the eye like that of separate battalions.' So he divided the troops into forty battalions, each about a thousand strong and under a trusted

forces. Ibn Khaldûn reads so; and likewise the tradition that Omar, in eventually deposing him, appointed Abu Obeida similarly to the supreme command. If so, Khâlid may have chosen not to excite jealousy by assuming the supremacy at once, but rather to have obtained it by consent. But our information is, at this early period, vague and incomplete.

[1] The tale is full of childish matter. The following is an outline from which the reader may draw his own conclusion. When the two armies were drawn up for battle, Jâreja, riding forth from the Roman ranks, called out to Khâlid as if challenging him to single combat. They drew so near to one another, midway between the two armies, that their horses' necks touched. Having pledged their word to each other, a conversation ensued. Jâreja asked Khâlid why he was called the 'Sword of God,' and whether a sword had really been sent down to him from heaven. Khâlid smiled, and expounded to him the basis and practice of Islam. The ingenuous Roman, convinced, forthwith reversed his shield; whereupon Khâlid, leading him away to his tent, sprinkled clean water upon him and taught him to pray,—Jâreja following him, with the prescribed prostrations and words, in two Rakáats. Meanwhile his followers, supposing that he had attacked Khâlid and been decoyed away by him, advanced rapidly on the Moslem line, which at first gave way, and both sides became promiscuously engaged. Then Khâlid, with Jâreja now upon his side, issued forth and at the head of their troops charged the Romans and drove them back; Jâreja fought by the side of Khâlid all day long, and in the evening was slain, dying a faithful martyr, though he had prayed but once. The tale is probably founded on fact, and framed so as to cover the defection of some Roman general—perhaps a Bedouin,—who, by previous arrangement, came over to Khâlid on the day of battle, with a following, perhaps, of Syrians from the Roman camp. *Jâreja* may be the Arab rendering here for George.

leader.[1] These he arranged so that one half formed the centre, under Abu Obeida. Ten battalions were then assigned to each wing, of which one was led by Amru and Shorahbîl; the other by Yezîd, whose aged father, Abu Sofiân, was bid to go from troop to troop, and rouse their ardour by martial declamation.[2]

The Roman army advances;

It was soon manifest that the Byzantine captains were preparing to deliver a general and decisive charge. Issuing from their defences, they rolled up in dense volume along both sides of the plain. A bystander, gazing at the moving field, exclaimed, 'How many the Romans, how few the Moslems!' 'Nay,' cried Khâlid, 'say rather "How many the Moslems, how few the Romans"; for, if ye count aright, numbers wax by the help of the Lord, but when He withdraweth His face, then they wane. I would that the Romans were double the number they now appear, if I had but under me my good Arab steed!'—for the hoofs of his favourite bay had been worn down by the rapid marching from Irâc. Still the Romans kept rolling up in dense columns. The fate of Syria depended on the day.

but is kept in check.

As the enemy drew near, Khâlid called upon Ikrima, who had brought his reserve upon the field, and Cacâa with his warriors from Irâc, to advance and check them. Just then a messenger rode up in haste, carrying a despatch from Medîna. To the inquiry of those who flocked around, he answered: 'All is well, and reinforcements on the way.' But in Khâlid's ear he whispered a secret message, and he

[1] Battalion or Kardûs. The number of battalions now formed is variously given at from thirty to forty. The leader of each is named; but probably tradition has merely selected the most likely names, for in other respects there is a great want of detail in the narrative.

[2] The person performing this duty was called *Al Cass*, the Declaimer. The following is a specimen of the address by which Abu Sofiân stirred up each battalion. 'Lord! these be the champions of Arabia, the defenders of the Faith. Those yonder are the champions of Rome, the defenders of Idolatry. O Lord! this is a day to be held in remembrance among Thy great days. Wherefore send down help upon Thy servants and succour them.'

delivered a letter which, hastily glanced at, Khâlid slipped into his quiver. Then, bidding the messenger keep close by him throughout the day, he rode forth to meet Jâreja.

Battle of Wacûsa, or the Yermûk. Rajab, A.H. XIII. Sept., A.D. 634.

The defection of this general was a calamity to the Romans, but at the first it caused an unexpected issue. He had probably a troop, or escort, which followed him, as he rode forth towards the Arab general; but whether or no, a Roman battalion, mistaking his movement for a desperate attack upon the enemy, advanced to his support with such an energetic charge that the Moslem front was broken and thrown into confusion. Ikrima stood firm. He who in the days of Ignorance had measured arms even with the Prophet of the Lord, should he flee before the infidel! 'Who now,' he cried, 'will join me in the covenant of death?' Four hundred, with his own son, and the hero Dhirâr, took the fatal pledge.[1] He charged, and the battalion which had created the surprise, bewildered at the treachery of Jâreja, fell back. The ground now clear, Khâlid ordered the whole line to move forward. The Romans too advanced, and the charge was met on both sides with the sword. All day the battle raged. Fortune varied; and the carnage amongst the Moslems, as well as the Romans, was great. Ikrima's gallant company, holding their ground firm as a rock in front of Khâlid's tent, bore the brunt of the day; they were slain or disabled almost to a man. So fierce were the Arabs, that even the women joined their husbands and brothers in the field; and Huweiria, daughter of Abu Sofiân, inheriting the spirit of her mother Hind, was severely wounded in an encounter with the enemy.[2]

[1] Dhirâr is a favourite hero with the pseudo-Wackidy and other romancers, who represent him as performing the most marvellous feats in the field. Ikrima's war-song was:—

A noble maid, both fair and tender,
Knows that her knight can well defend her.

[2] Abu Sofiân himself lost an eye; it was pierced by an arrow, which was with difficulty withdrawn. There is a foolish tale that Abdallah, son of

The Moslem victory.

Towards evening the Romans began to falter. Khâlid, quickly perceiving that their horse were declining from the infantry, launched his centre as a wedge between the two. The cavalry, with nothing behind them but the precipice, made a fierce charge for their lives; the Moslem troops opened to let them pass, and so they gained the open country and never again appeared. The Moslems then turned right and left upon the remaining force cooped up between the ravine and the chasm; and, as they drove all before them, the Romans on both hands 'were toppled over the bank even as a wall is toppled over.' The battle drew on into the night, but opposition was now in vain. Those that escaped the sword were hurled in a moving mass over the edge into the yawning gulf. 'One struggling would draw ten others with him, the free as well as chained.' And so, in dire confusion and dismay, the whole multitude perished. The fatal chasm YACÛSA engulfed, we are told, 100,000 men.[1] Ficâr, the Roman general, and his fellow-captains, unable to bear the sight, sat down, drew their togas around them, and, hiding their faces in despair and shame, awaited thus their fate.

Its importance.

Morning found the Moslems in silent possession of the great plain. They flocked into the Roman entrenchment, and Khâlid took possession of Theodoric's royal tent. The camp and its rich equipage yielded a booty of 1,500 pieces to each horseman. More than this, the fearful fate of the army struck such terror into the Byzantine court and the

Zobeir, then a boy, overheard Abu Sofiân, who, with a company of the Coreish, stood upon a knoll, applauding the Romans when they advanced, and crying, 'Out upon you,' when they fell back, as if siding with them. He ran and told his father, who laughed, saying, 'It is mere spite, for we are a deal better than the Romans.' This is a manifest anti-Omeyyad tale, for tradition is almost unanimous that Abu Sofiân, notwithstanding his age, distinguished himself that day by his valour and his ardour in stirring up the troops (*Ibn Khaldûn*, p. 85); and indeed it would have been altogether against his interest to have done otherwise.

[1] The disaster, making every allowance for exaggeration, must have been appalling. We are told that there were driven over the precipice 80,000 'chained' and 40,000 free soldiers, besides those that perished by the sword.

people of the land, that the fate of Syria was sealed. Unlike the Persian campaign, the opposition that remained was poor and feeble.

Heavy loss.

The victory was purchased at a heavy cost. Three thousand were buried on the field, besides a great multitude wounded; and among the fallen we read many distinguished names. Of Ikrima's forlorn hope few survived. The famous Dhirâr, badly wounded, recovered to signalise himself on other fields. But Ikrima and his son both sank under their wounds. In the morning, when near their end, they were carried to the royal tent of Khâlid. He laid the head of the father on his breast, and of the son upon his thigh, tenderly wiped their faces and moistened their lips with water. And as they passed away, he kept fondly saying: 'Alas, alas! the father and the son; who would have thought of a martyr's death for both!'

Khâlid deposed by Omar.

But Khâlid was no longer in command. The messenger in the field had whispered in his ear the news of Abu Bekr's death; and the letter which he then slipt into his quiver brought the new Caliph's order that Khâlid should deliver up command into the hands of Abu Obeida.[1]

Date of the battle.

The battle was fought in the end of August, or the beginning of September, A.D. 634.[2]

Before narrating the sequel of this great victory, we must turn for a little to what was passing elsewhere.

[1] The order given by Omar is couched in terms which would appear to imply that Khâlid was in supreme command in Syria, from which command he was now deposed, and Abu Obeida substituted in his room. This is not consistent with the previous narrative. It is possible, indeed, to construe the order as deposing Khâlid simply from his command over his own Irâc contingent, and transferring it to Abu Obeida. But it is certain that Abu Obeida from this time became in permanence the Ameer, or governor-general and commander-in-chief of Syria. See *Ibn Khaldûn*, p. 86, and previous note p. 106.

[2] The date is fixed by that of Abu Bekr's death (August 22); *twenty days* after which we are told that the battle was fought. But the messenger bringing the news of the Caliph's death could hardly have taken more than half that time for so urgent a journey. We may safely, therefore, place the action about the end of August (Jumâd II.); or, rather, following other traditions, early in Rajab, that is, the beginning of September.

CHAPTER XII.

EVENTS IN IRAC—MOTHANNA AND THE PERSIANS—NEED OF REINFORCEMENTS.

Moharram—Jumâd, A.H. XIII.
March—August, A.D. 634.

Mothanna attacked by the Persians.

AFTER bidding Khâlid farewell, Mothanna returned to Hîra, and made the best disposition of his small force that he could, so as to strengthen his defences towards the Persian capital. That the position was not altogether secure is shown by the precaution of Khâlid, just before his departure, in sending the sick and infirm with the women and children home, for the time, to Arabia. A new prince, Shahrîrân, had succeeded to the throne; and he now thought to expel the invaders by sending an army under Hormuz, 10,000 strong, against them.[1] Mothanna, having timely warning, immediately called in his outlying garrisons, but, with every exertion, the force brought together was dangerously small in comparison with the Persian host. The king, confident of victory, wrote to Mothanna an insulting letter that 'he was about to drive him away with an army of fowl-men and swine-herds.' Mothanna answered: 'Thou art either a braggart or a liar. If what thou sayest be true, then blessed be the Lord that hath reduced thee to such defenders!' Having despatched this reply, he advanced boldly to meet Hormuz. Leaving Hîra, the little force passed under the dreary ruin of Birs Nimrud, and crossing the

[1] The new king is called otherwise Shahrizân and Shahrîzâz, son of Ardshîr. His commander is called Hormuz *Jâdzoweih*.

Euphrates, encamped to the north of the vast mound which marks the site of Babylon. There, some fifty miles from the capital, amid a network of canals watering the country (now a wilderness or a swamp), he chose the battle-ground; and, placing his two brothers in charge of either wing, himself at the head of the centre, awaited the attack of Hormuz. The Persian line was preceded by a war-elephant, which threw the Arab ranks into confusion, and for a while paralysed their action. Mothanna, followed by an adventurous band, surrounded the great creature, pierced it in a mortal part, and so brought it to the ground. Deprived of this adventitious help, the enemy gave way before the fierce onslaught of the Arabs, who pursued the fugitives across the plain of Dura to the very gates of Medâin. The praises of 'the hero of the elephant' have been handed down in Arabian verse.[1]

Battle of Babylon. A.H. XIII. Summer, A.D. 634.

Shahrîrân did not long survive the defeat. His son, succeeding him, was killed in a rebellion caused by his attempt to give Azarmîdokht, a princess of the royal blood, in marriage to a favourite minister. The princess, saved by loyal hands from the dishonour, succeeded to the throne. From a court weakened thus by continual change and treachery, there was little, it might be thought, to fear. But Mothanna had to guard a frontier of great extent, and for the task his army was far too small. The Moslem conquests stretched from the lower Tigris to the desert, and from the Persian Gulf all up the banks of the Euphrates to Anbâr. The people were not with him, and the Bedouins of Mesopotamia were distinctly against him. Victories might be won, but they could not be followed up. The position, with so small a force, was clearly full of risk. Accordingly,

Mothanna asks Abu Bekr for reinforcements.

[1] The poet Farazdac (who flourished shortly after), enumerating the various families of the Beni Bekr ibn Wâil, when he comes to the clan of Mothanna, describes him as 'the hero who slew the elephant at the battle of Babylon.' So also Abda, a Bedouin poet, who, being in search of his mistress, chanced to be present as a wayfarer at the battle, makes a similar reference to the slaughter of the elephant.

Mothanna urged upon the Caliph the pressing need of reinforcements. He also pointed out how they might be met without stint of number. 'Remove the embargo,' he wrote, 'from the apostate but now repentant tribes; they will flock to the war, and, in this crusade against the Persians, none will be more brave or eager.' Answer being long delayed, Mothanna became anxious, and ventured to Medîna, there to urge his suit in person.[1] He found Abu Bekr on his death-bed. The aged Caliph knew that his end was near at hand; but his mind was clear, and, on hearing the statement of Mothanna, he at once perceived the urgency of the case. 'Call Omar to me,' he said (for he had already declared him successor); and when Omar came, he addressed him thus in earnest tone:—'Command a levy for Mothanna. Tarry not. If I die, as I think, this day, wait not till the evening; if I linger till night, wait not till the morning. Let not sorrow for me divert you from the service of Islam and the business of your Lord. Ye saw what I did myself when the Prophet died (and there could be no greater sorrow for mankind than that); truly if grief had stayed me then from girding my loins in the cause of the Lord and of his Prophet, the Faith had fared badly; the flame of rebellion had surely kindled in the city. And, list thee, Omar! when the Lord shall have given thee victory in Syria, then send back to Irâc its army; for they are the proper garrison thereof, and fittest to administer it.'

Abu Bekr on his death-bed desires Omar to order a levy.

Omar was touched by the delicacy of his last words, and the allusion they contained without expressing it. 'For,' said he, 'Abu Bekr knew that it grieved me when he gave the command to Khâlid; therefore he bade me to send back his army to Irâc, but forbore to name the name of Khâlid.' He listened attentively to the dying Caliph's words, and promised to fulfil them.

Omar accepts the charge.

[1] The delay may have been occasioned by Abu Bekr's sickness, or the proposal to employ the apostate Arabs in the campaign may have been difficult to answer.

CHAPTER XIII.

SICKNESS AND DEATH OF ABU BEKR.

Jumâd II., A.H. XIII. August, A.D. 634.

Abu Bekr presides over the pilgrimage at Mecca. Dzul Hijj, A.H. XII. March, A.D. 634.

In the first year of his Caliphate, Abu Bekr was hindered by the engrossing work of repressing apostasy and rebellion, from being present at the yearly pilgrimage in Mecca. But next year he presided at the pilgrimage himself. As the party entered the vale of Mecca, the young men hastened to tell his father, who, blind from great age, was seated at his door. On his son's approach, he arose and stood up to greet him. Abu Bekr made his camel to kneel down at the threshold, and alighting, embraced his father, who was shedding tears of delight, and kissed him between the eyes. Attâb, the governor, Soheil, and the other great men of Mecca, approached and shook the Caliph by the hand. Then they did obeisance to his father, who said: 'These be our nobles; honour them, my son, and make much of them.' 'Make much of them,' answered Abu Bekr, 'that I do; but (mindful of his Master's teaching), as for honour, there is none save that which cometh from the Lord alone.' After bathing, he went forth in pilgrim garb, to kiss the Black Stone, and encompass the Holy House. The people crowded round him; and as they made mention of the Prophet, Abu Bekr wept. It was but two years since Mahomet had been amongst them, celebrating the same rites, and how much of danger and deliverance had come to pass in this short space! And so they mourned his loss. At midday, he again went through the ceremonies of the Káaba; then, sitting down

beneath the shadow of the Hall of Council,[1] he commanded the citizens that, if any had complaint to make or justice to demand, he should speak. All were silent; so he praised the people and their governor. Then he arose and celebrated the midday prayer. After that he sat down again for a little, and bade them all Farewell. Then he turned to go, and departed for Medîna.[2]

Abu Bekr's sickness. Jumâd II., A.H. XIII. August, A.D. 634.

During the summer, Abu Bekr was busied with reinforcements for the Syrian campaign. Born three years after the era of the Elephant,[3] he was now over three-score years of age; but, simple and temperate in his habits, still hale and vigorous. In the autumn, happening to bathe incautiously on a cold day, he was seized with a fever, which laid him low and obliged him to make over the presidency at public prayer to Omar.[4] When the illness had lasted for a fortnight, his friends, coming daily to ask after him, at last became anxious, and said: 'Shall we send for the physician?' 'He[5] hath been to me already,' answered Abu Bekr. 'And what said he?' 'He saith to me *I am about*

[1] The Council House (Dar ul Nadwâ) built by Cossaí. *Life of Mahomet*, Introduction.

[2] From this account it would appear that Abu Bekr did not perform the full pilgrimage to Mina and Arafât. Some authorities make Omar to preside at this pilgrimage, others Abd al Rahmân. Possibly Abu Bekr performed only the Omra or Lesser Pilgrimage (*Ibid.* p. xii.), and left Omar to fulfil the other rites.

There is a curious incident quoted by an early writer as an authority to prove that Abu Bekr was himself present. Some one bit the ear of a man at the pilgrimage in play. Abu Bekr sent the case to Omar as judge, and he summoned a surgeon. Thereupon Abu Bekr recited, as in point, a story of the Prophet, who, having made the gift of a slave to his aunt, bade her not to bring him up as a surgeon, lest in the discharge of his profession he should be subject to reprisals for injuries done in surgical operations.

[3] That is, the year in which the Viceroy of Yemen besieged Mecca. He had in his train an elephant; and the year, A.D. 570, is therefore called 'the year of the Elephant.' *Ibid.* p. xxvi.

[4] There is a tradition that Abu Bekr's illness was owing to poison, given to him and to Attâb and another, which, being a slow but deadly drug, did not take effect till a year after. No details are given; the tale is evidently apocryphal, and based on the desire (common in those early days) to give to Abu Bekr the honour of martyrdom.

[5] Meaning the Divine physician.

to do that with thee which I purpose to do.' So they understood his meaning and were silent. Aware thus that his end was not far, he made preparation for a successor. His choice was fixed on Omar; but willing to fortify his own conviction by the sense of others, he first consulted Abd al Rahmân, who praised Omar as the fittest man, but withal inclined to be severe.—'Which,' responded the dying Caliph, 'is because he saw me soft and tender-hearted; when himself the Master, he will forego much of what thou sayest. I have watched him narrowly. If I were angry with one, he would intercede in his behalf; if over lenient, then he would be severe.' Othmân, too, confirmed his choice. 'What is hidden of Omar,' he said, 'is better than that which doth appear. There is not his equal amongst us all.'[1] Talha, on the other hand, expostulated: 'If we have suffered so much from Omar whilst thou wast yet with us to temper his severity, what will it be when thou art gone to thy Lord, there to answer for having left His people to the care of so hard a master?' 'Set me up,' cried the Caliph, much excited; 'dost thou seek to frighten me? I swear that when I meet my Lord, I will say to Him, "I have appointed as ruler over Thy people him that is the best amongst them."'

Abu Bekr appoints Omar his successor.

Thereupon Abu Bekr called for Othmân and dictated an ordinance appointing Omar his successor. He fainted while it was being written down. On recovering, he bade Othmân to read it over. When he had heard it all, he was satisfied, and praised the Lord; 'for,' said he, 'I saw thee apprehensive lest, if in the swoon I had passed away, then the

[1] The tradition proceeds: Abu Bekr answered, 'The Lord bless thee, Othmân! If I had not chosen Omar, then I had not passed thee over; and I know not whether Omar will accept the office. As for myself, I could wish that I had never borne the burden of the Caliphate, but had been of those who departed this life in times that are past.'

This would imply that Abu Bekr had thought of Othmân as his successor in default of Omar. The conversation, however, is professedly secret and confidential. It rests solely on the authority of Othmân himself, and we need not give too much heed to it.

people had been left in doubt.' Upon this, he desired that the ordinance should be read in the hearing of the citizens, who had assembled in the court of the Great Mosque. Omar himself was present, and hushed the noise, that they might hear. Then, desiring to obtain the assent of the people, the dying Caliph bade his wife Asma raise him up to the window (for the Caliph's house looked out upon the court); so she bore him, in her beautifully tattooed arms, to the window, from whence, with a great effort, he called out: 'Are ye satisfied with him whom I have appointed over you? It is none of mine own kin, but Omar, son of Khattâb. Verily I have done my best to choose the fittest. Wherefore, ye will obey him loyally.' The people answered with one voice, 'Yea, we will obey.'[1]

His death, 21st Jumâd II., A.H. XIII. August 22, A.D. 634,

To the end the mind of Abu Bekr remained clear and vigorous. On the last day of his life, he gave audience, as we have seen, to Mothanna, and, grasping the critical state of affairs, commanded Omar to raise, with all despatch, a levy for Irâc. During his illness he recited these verses on the vanity of life:

There is none that owneth herds or camels but must leave them to his heir;
And whosoever taketh spoil, one day he shall be spoiled of the same.
Every traveller, wheresoe'er he wander and however far, returneth;
Excepting only the pathway of death, from which there is no return.

[1] It is not stated on what day this occurred. It may have been only a day or two before his death; for his interview with Mothanna shows that even on the last day of his life, he was able to gather up his strength.

The ordinance ran in these words: 'In the name of the Lord most Merciful! This is the covenant of Abu Bekr, son of Abu Cohâfa, with the Moslems:' (here he swooned away)—'I have appointed, as my Successor over you, Omar, son of Khattâb. I have not in anywise spared myself in this matter; but have striven to the utmost to do the best for you.' Ibn Khaldûn adds: 'I know that he will do judgment and justice amongst you; but if he commit tyranny or injustice, verily the future is hidden from mine eyes.'

Asma had been the wife of Jâfar; and again, after Abu Bekr's death, became one of Aly's numerous wives. The Arab women still tattoo their breasts and arms with elaborate and beautiful designs.

The reader will remark the freedom with which women of the highest rank appeared in public even at this period, their habits partaking still of the freedom of the desert. But this was not long to last.

At another time one repeated verses from a heathen poet supposed to be appropriate to the occasion. Abu Bekr was displeased, and said: 'Not so; say rather (and he quoted from a passage of the Corân relating to death and judgment) —*Then the agony of death shall come in truth. This, O man, is what thou soughtest to avoid.*'[1]

His last act was to summon Omar to his bedside, and, as his dying charge, to counsel him, which he did at great length, to temper hardness and severity with mildness and moderation. Shortly after, he sank, and feeling the agony approach, breathed his last with these words: 'Lord, make me to die a true believer. Take me to join the blessed ones on high!'[2]

Abu Bekr died on August 22, A.D. 634, having reigned two years and three months.[3] His body was laid out, in pursuance of his own wish, by the loving hands of Asma, and of Abd al Rahmân, his son; and he was wound in the same clothes in which he died; 'for,' said he, 'new clothes befit the living, but old the mouldering body.'[4] The same Companions that bore the Prophet's bier bore also that of Abu Bekr; and they laid him in the same grave, the Caliph's head resting by his Master's shoulder. Omar performed the funeral service, praying, as was customary, over the bier. The funeral procession had not far to go; it had only to cross the area in front of the Great Mosque; for Abu Bekr died in the house appointed for him by Mahomet opposite his own, and burial.

[1] Sura, v. 18. Some make this to have been said in reply to Ayesha, who had been repeating the few lines just given as recited by Abu Bekr himself.

[2] The prayer is somewhat similar to the last words of Mahomet. See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 509.

[3] The 21st Jumâd II. He reigned two years, three months, and ten days. He died on the same day of the week (Monday) as Mahomet, and at the same age, 63 lunar years.

[4] Abu Bekr told Asma that he wished her alone to wash his body and lay it out. On her replying that her strength was not equal to the task, he said that she might ask Abd al Rahmân to help her. He desired to be buried in the same two garments he had on, with a new piece over them; and when those around objected, he made use of the words in the text.

and looking out, like it, upon the open court of the Sanctuary.[1]

Abu Bekr's character. Simple life at Al Sunh.

During the greater part of his Caliphate, he had occupied that house. For the first six months, indeed, after Mahomet's death, he continued to live chiefly, as he had done before, at Al Sunh, a suburb of Upper Medîna. Here he inhabited a simple dwelling made of palm stems, with the family of Habîba, the wife whom he married when he came to Medîna, and who was with child when he died, and bore him a daughter shortly after. Every morning he rode or walked to the Great Mosque, where Mahomet had lived and ruled, for the discharge of the business of the State, and to perform the daily prayers, Omar presiding in his absence. For the more important service of Friday, when a speech or sermon was delivered, he stayed at home to dye his hair and beard, and dress more carefully; and so did not appear till the time of midday prayer. In this primitive home, as elsewhere, he preserved the severe simplicity of early life, and even fed and milked the goats of the household. At the first also he continued to maintain himself by merchandise; but finding it interfere with the proper burdens of the State, he consented to forego all other occupation, and to receive a yearly allowance of six thousand dirhems for his household charges.[2]

[1] It was opposite the house of Othmân, which adjoined the apartments of Ayesha and the other widows of Mahomet. The cortège would thus pass across the open court of the mosque. The grave was dug after the same fashion as Mahomet's (*Life*, p. 517). Talha, and Abd al Rahmân the Caliph's son, were the two who descended to adjust the body in the grave.

A curious incident illustrates the rude manners of the time. When her father died, Ayesha, with her sister Omm Farwa (Ashâth'e wife), and a party of female friends, began to wail. Omar forbade it, as a work of Satan, but they persisted. Omar, on this, ordered Hishâm to bring forth Omm Farwa. Ayesha screamed and said, 'Who is Omar? I forbid thee my house.' But Omm Farwa was brought forth and beaten with a whip, on which the mourning women dispersed. The story is probably exaggerated; but that it should have been preserved at all is a proof of the rough notions prevalent as to the treatment of ladies of rank and birth at this early period.

[2] Some say 8,000 dirhems; others, that he had no fixed allowance, but took only what sufficed for the maintenance of his family. In support of the latter statement, a tradition is given that his wife, having a longing for some

Removes his dwelling to the Great Mosque.

Finding Al Sunh at an inconvenient distance from the Great Mosque, where, as in the time of Mahomet, the affairs of the kingdom continued to be transacted, he transferred his residence, and with it the Treasury, thither. The Exchequer of Islam was in those days but a simple one. It needed neither guard nor office of account. The tithes were given to the poor, or spent on equipage and arms. The spoil of war, and gold and silver from the mines,[1] or elsewhere, were all distributed as soon as received, or on the following morning.[2] All shared alike, the recent convert and the veteran, male and female, bond and free. As a claimant on the Moslem treasury, every believing Arab was his brother's equal. When urged to recognise precedence in the faith as a ground of preference, he would reply, 'That is for the Lord. He will fulfil the reward of such as have excelled, in the world to come. These gifts are but an accident of the present life.' After his death, Omar had the treasury opened; and they found therein but a solitary golden piece, which had slipped out of the bags; so they lifted up their voices and wept, and blessed his memory. His conscience troubled him for having taken even what he did by way of stipend from the people's money; on his death-bed, therefore, he gave command that

sweetmeats, saved up a little money for the purpose. Abu Bekr finding it out, took the whole sum and put it back into the treasury, as more than absolutely needed for the maintenance of his household. Many of these traditions are evidently exaggerated with the view of enhancing the hardness and thrift of Abu Bekr's life, and his conscientious use of the public money, in contrast with the luxury and extravagance of later Caliphs. Thus we are told that at his death he desired that whatever property was found in his house should be sent to Omar, in repayment of what he had received; there was only a camel, a cutler-slave, and a carpet worth five dirhems. They were sent to Omar with the deceased Caliph's message, whereat Omar wept, but carried out the request to the letter. All these stories, the feeding and milking of the goats, engaging in merchandise, &c., must be received dubiously.

[1] Mines were worked in the lands of the Beni Suleim.

[2] In the general distribution, each soul received ten dirhems the first year, and twenty the second, besides what was spent in the public service. Warm clothing was purchased from the Bedouin tribes, and distributed among the destitute in the winter. In all, they estimate that 200,000 dirhems (say 10,000*l.*) were received in Abu Bekr's reign—but a poor forecast of what was to come! A woman was employed to weigh the treasure as it came in.

certain lands, his private property, should be sold, and a sum equal to all that he had received refunded.

Mild and gentle disposition.

In disposition Abu Bekr was singularly mild and gentle. Omar used to say that there was no man for whom the people would more readily have laid down their life. They gave him the sobriquet of 'the Sighing,' because of his tender-heartedness. Excepting the solitary case in which he committed a traitor-brigand to the flames, no single act of cruelty stands against him; and for that he expressed his sorrow. It was one of the three things, he used to say, which he would wish undone. The others were, that he had pardoned Ashâth, who deserved death; and that when he transferred Khâlid to Syria, he had not at the same time sent Omar to Irâc. 'Then,' said he, 'I should have stretched out mine arms, both the right and the left, in the ways of the Lord.'[1]

His wives and family.

Unlike his Master, he contented himself with but few wives. He had married two at Mecca before his conversion. On his arrival at Medîna he married the daughter of a Citizen, and, later on, Asma, the widow of Jáfar. By all of these he left issue. There is no mention of any other wives, nor of any slave-girls in his harem.[2] Of his children, he loved Ayesha the best, and, in proof of special affection, had given her a property for her own. On his death-bed, this troubled his conscientious spirit, and he said to her, 'I wish thee, my daughter, to return it, that it may be divided with the rest of the inheritance amongst you all, not forgetting the one yet unborn.'[3] His father

[1] The three things are variously related: *e.g.* that he did not himself go forth with the expeditions against the apostate tribes; others, of weak authority, relate chiefly to the succession to the Caliphate, and some are clearly of an Alyite stamp.

[2] It does not, however, by any means follow that he had none. Slave-girls, as part of the harem, are rarely mentioned, unless one happened to bear issue to her master, when she became free, as his *Omm walad.*

[3] It seems he had a presentiment it would be a girl, for he said to Ayesha: 'Thy brothers and *sisters* must all share equally.' 'What sisters?' she asked in surprise; 'there is only Asma.' 'The one,' he answered, 'that Habîba bint Khârija is big with.' One of his sons, Abdallah, was only three years old at

survived him six months, reaching the great age of ninety-seven.'[1]

Simplicity and diligence in the affairs of state.

At his court, Abu Bekr maintained the same simple and frugal life as Mahomet. Guards and servitors there were none, nor anything approaching the pomp and circumstance of state. He was diligent in business. He leaned upon Omar as his counsellor, whose judgment (excepting in a few cases in which it was warped by prejudice) had so great weight with him, that he might be said to have shared in the government. Abu Bekr never spared himself, and many incidents are related of the manner in which he descended to the minutest things. Thus, he would sally forth by night to seek for any destitute or oppressed person; and Omar found him one night inquiring into the affairs of a poor blind widow, whose case Omar himself had gone forth to look after. The department of justice was made over to Omar, but for a whole year, we are told, hardly two suitors came before him. The Seal of state bore the legend, *God the best of Potentates.*[2] The despatches were chiefly indited by Aly; and Abu Bekr made use also of Zeid (the amanuensis of the Prophet and compiler of the Corân) and of Othmân, or of any other penman who happened to be at hand.[3] In the choice of his agents for high office or command, he was absolutely free from nepotism or partiality, and was wise and discerning in his estimate of character.

But he had not Omar's strength or decision; nor was his

his death; and his mother, Coteila, was probably alive when he died. When Omm Rumân, Ayesha's mother, died, is nowhere stated.

[1] The old blind man, hearing a commotion at Mecca, asked what it might be, and being told that his son had died—'Alas!' he cried, 'glory hath departed from us; and who succeedeth him?' They answered, Omar. 'It is well,' he replied; 'for he was his worthy fellow.' As the Caliph's father, he inherited a sixth part of his son's estate.

[2] نعم الثادر الله

[3] This is almost the only mention made of Aly during Abu Bekr's Caliphate, excepting when he gives advice in the Caliph's Council, marries a new wife, or purchases some attractive bond-maid. In such a self-indulgent life, he was becoming portly and inactive.

Not so strong, or sternly just, as Omar.

sense of justice so keen and stern. This is illustrated in the matter of the two Khâlids. From the one—Khâlid ibn Saîd, though warned by Omar and Aly, he hesitated to withhold a command; and the disaster in Syria was the consequence. On the other hand, by refusing to degrade Khâlid, 'the Sword of God,' for injustice and cruelty and the scandal of taking to wife his victim's widow, he became indirectly responsible for his acts. Yet to this unscrupulous agent it is due, more than to any other, that Islam survived and triumphed. But Abu Bekr was not wanting in firmness when the occasion demanded; for example, the despatch of Osâma's army, and the defence of Medîna against the apostate tribes, when he stood almost alone and all around was dark, showed a boldness and steadfastness of purpose, which, more than anything else, contributed to turn the tide of rebellion and apostasy.

Faith in Mahomet the secret of his strength.

The secret of Abu Bekr's strength was faith in Mahomet. He would say: 'Call me not *the Caliph of the Lord*: I am but *the Caliph of the Prophet of the Lord*.' The question with him ever was, What did Mahomet command? or, What now should he have done? From this he never swerved one hair's-breadth. And so it was that he crushed apostasy, and laid secure the foundations of Islam. His reign was short, but, after Mahomet himself, there is no one to whom the Faith is more beholden.

Abu Bekr's belief in Mahomet; presumptive evidence of Mahomet's own sincerity.

For this reason, and because his belief in the Prophet is itself a strong evidence of the sincerity of Mahomet himself, I have dwelt at some length upon his life and character. Had Mahomet been from the first a conscious impostor, he never could have won the faith and friendship of a man who was not only sagacious and wise, but simple and sincere. Abu Bekr had no thought of personal aggrandisement. Endowed with sovereign and irresponsible power, he used it simply for the interests of Islam and the people's good. He was too shrewd to be himself deceived, and too honest himself to act the part of a deceiver.

CHAPTER XIV.

ACCESSION OF OMAR—REINFORCEMENTS FOR IRAC—CAMPAIGN THERE UNDER ABU OBEID AND MOTHANNA.

Jumâd II., A.H. XIII.—Moharram, A.H. XIV.
August, A.D. 634—March, A.D. 635.

Accession of Omar.

ON the morrow after Abu Bekr's death, Omar ascended the pulpit, and addressed the people assembled in the Great Mosque. 'The Arabs,' he said, 'are like a rebellious camel obliged to follow its driver, and it pertaineth to the driver to see which way he leadeth the same. By the Lord of the Kâaba! even thus will I guide you in the way that ye should go.'

His first two acts.

The first act of the new Caliph was to issue the despatch, with which the reader is already acquainted, deposing Khâlid. The second was, in fulfilment of Abu Bekr's dying behest, to raise a fresh levy for Mothanna. Leaving the former, we turn for the present to the latter.

Fresh levies sent to Irâc under Abu Obeid.

A new standard was planted in the court of the Great Mosque, and urgent proclamation made that soldiers for the campaign in Irâc were to rally round it. Then followed the oath of fealty to Omar, which was taken by all who were in and around the city, and was not completed for three days. Meanwhile, so great a fear of Persian pomp and prowess had fallen on the people, that none responded to the military call. Seeing this, Mothanna harangued them in a stirring speech. He told them of his victories, the endless plunder, the captives, male and female, and the fruitful lands which they had already spoiled the enemy of; 'and the Lord,' he

added, 'waiteth but to give the rest into your hands.' Warmed by his discourse, and stung by the indignant invectives of Omar, men began at last to offer. The first who came forward was Abu Obeid, a citizen of Tâyif; and then numbers crowded to the standard. When they had reached a thousand, those around began to say to Omar: 'Now choose thee one of the chiefest among them to be Ameer—a veteran Companion of the Prophet,—Refugee, or Citizen.'[1] 'That I will not,' said Omar. 'Wherein doth the glory of the Companions consist but in this, that they were the first to rally round the Prophet? But now ye are backward, and come not to the help of the Lord. Such as be ready for the burden, whether it be light or whether it be heavy, these have the better claim. Verily I will give the command to none but to him that first came forth.' Then turning to Abu Obeid: 'I appoint thee,' he said, 'over this force, because thou wast the first to offer; and *in eagerness for battle is the Arab's glory.*' Nevertheless, he earnestly enjoined upon him ever to take counsel with the Companions of the Prophet, and to associate them with him in the conduct of affairs. So the force started for Irâc. At the same time Omar removed the ban against the employment of the once apostate tribes; and bade Abu Obeid to summon to his standard all, without distinction, who since the apostasy had made a good profession. Mothanna, with a lightened heart, hastened back in advance of Abu Obeid, and returned to Hîra after the absence of a month.

Rustem rouses the Persians against the invaders.

During this period, while Mothanna was away, further changes were transpiring at the unhappy court of Persia. Prince and princess succeeded one another in the midst of bloodshed and rebellion, till at last a royal lady named Burân summoned Rustem, a general of renown, from Khorasan, and by his aid established herself as Regent upon the throne.[2]

[1] *I.e.* of the Muhâjerîn or Ansâr; that is, the Coreish, on the one hand, and the natives of Medîna on the other.

[2] The following is an outline of the narrative, as given by the Arab

Rustem was an astrologer, and knew from the conjunction of the planets the impending fate of Persia. When asked why then he had linked himself with a doomed cause, he answered that it was the love of pomp and riches. Amidst such silly tales, of which there is no lack, we may discern the lineaments of a prince brave in the field, but proud and overweening. Such was the man whose authority Burân now proclaimed supreme. His energy was soon felt. The nobles rallied round him; the great landholders were incited to rise against the invaders, and Mesopotamia, with the Sawâd and delta, speedily cast off the Moslem yoke. Two columns were despatched from Medâin, one under Jabân to cross the Euphrates and advance on Hîra; the other under Narsa to occupy Kaskar between the Euphrates and Tigris. The people flocked to their standard, and the position of the Moslems again became precarious.

Mothanna, thus threatened, called in his forces, but they were too few to oppose the enemy; so he abandoned Hîra,

historians. On Shahrîrân's death, after the battle of Babylon (summer of A.D. 634), Dokht Zenân, daughter of Chosroes (Perwîz), for a brief period, and then Sapor, son of Shahrîran, occupied the throne. The latter gave the hand of Azarmîdokht, another daughter of Chosroes, to his favourite minister Furrukhzâd. But she resented the alliance; and, at her call, the hero Siâwaksh slew the intended husband on the marriage night, besieged the palace, and, putting Sapor to death, proclaimed Azarmîdokht queen. Such was the state of things when Mothanna, in August, went to Medîna. During his absence, Burân, another daughter of Chosroes, having great influence with the nobles, summoned the warrior Rustem from Khorasan to avenge the death of his father, Furrukhzâd, which he did most effectually—defeating the royal troops, killing Siâwaksh, and putting out Azarmîdokht's eyes; and then he set Burân upon the throne. Her regency (such was the ordinance) should continue ten years, in default of any prince being discovered of the royal blood; after which, the male line being proved extinct, the dynasty would be confirmed in the female line. Burân then appointed Rustem her minister, with supreme powers, and the nobles rallied round him. This was just before Abu Obeid's appearance on the stage.

The chronology, however, is utterly confused and uncertain. This Burân is said to have opposed Shîra (Siroes) for a year; and, when he finally succumbed to have retained her authority as arbiter (*ádil*) in the State. She is also said to have sent gifts to Mahomet, &c. But so much we may assume as certain that between Perwîz (A.D. 628) and Yezdegird there was an interval of four and a half years. See Weil's *Chalifen*, vol. i. p. 64, and Tabari, vol. ii. p. 178.

Abu Obeid gains a victory over the Persians. Shaban, A.H. XIII. October, A.D. 634.

and falling back on Khaffân, by the border of the desert, on the road to Medîna, there awaited Abu Obeid. But he had to wait some time. Swelled by reinforcements from the tribes by the way, and, burdened by their families, it was a month before the army made its appearance there. After a few days' repose at Khaffân, Abu Obeid took command of the combined force, and, attacking Jabân, put him to flight. Then crossing the Euphrates, he surprised Narsa, who was strongly posted at a royal date-grove near to Kaskar, and, routing his army, took possession of his camp, with much spoil. Great store of dates fell into their hands, of a rare kind, reserved for royal use. These were distributed among the army, and became the common food of all. With the royal Fifth, a portion of them was sent to Medîna: 'Behold,' wrote Abu Obeid to his Master, 'the food wherewith the Lord hath fed us, eaten heretofore only by the kings of Persia. We desired that thou shouldest see the same with thine own eyes, taste it with thine own lips, and praise the Lord for his grace and goodness in giving us royal food to eat.' Jalenûs, another general, coming up too late to the help of Narsa, was also discomfited; and the unfortunate delta, prey to alternate conquest and defeat, began again to acknowledge Moslem sway. The neighbouring chiefs brought in their tribute, and, in proof of loyalty, made a feast of good things for Abu Obeid. But he declined to partake of it, unless shared equally with his soldiers. A further supply of the same delicacies was therefore furnished, and the whole army sat down with him to the repast. His determination to taste none of the Persian viands but in company with the rank and file of his men redounded greatly to his popularity.[1]

[1] The Persian campaign begins now to assume greater consistency and detail; but, partly from alteration of the river beds, and partly from the sites of towns, &c., being no longer known, it is not always easy to follow the course of the campaign. Namârick, the scene of Abu Obeid's first victory, was on the Bâdacla, or western branch of the Euphrates. Jabân was there

Bahmân sent with great army against Abu Obeid. A.H. XIII. Autumn, A.D. 634.

Enraged at the defeat of his generals, Rustem assembled a still larger force under the warrior Bahmân.[1] To mark the gravity of the crisis, the great banner of the empire, made of panthers' skins, was unfurled,[2] and an array of war elephants accompanied the army. Jalenûs, too, was sent back to fight, under the threat that if again he fled before the enemy, he would be put to death. Before this imposing host, the Arabian army fell back, and, re-crossing the Euphrates, took up ground on the right bank. Bahmân, following, encamped at Coss Nâtick, on the opposite shore. The field of battle was not far from Babylon, and, being on the highway between the Capital and Hîra, a bridge of boats spanned the river near the spot.[3] Bahmân, in his pride, gave Abu Obeid the option of crossing the river unopposed, thus leaving him the choice of either bank for the impending action. Abu Obeid desired to take the offer and pass over to the other side. His advisers strongly opposed the movement, and sought to dissuade him from quitting their more advantageous ground. But he made it a point of honour; and exclaiming, 'Shall we fear death more than they?' gave the order at once to cross. They found the ground upon the farther side confined; and, though they were under 10,000

taken prisoner; but the captors, not recognising his rank, ransomed him in exchange for two skilled artisans. Mothanna, discovering his quality, would have put him to death for the deception, but Abu Obeid stood by the ransom. 'The faithful are one body,' he said, 'and quarter given by any one of them must be sustained by all; it would be perfidy to put him to death.' He was therefore let go; but being again laid hold of after the battle of the Bridge, was then executed. The second engagement took place at the royal date-preserve of Sakatia, near Kaskar (subsequently the site of Wâsit). Abu Obeid, hearing that Jalenûs was on his way with supports, hurried on and gave battle to Narsa before he came up. Expeditions were then sent to Barô-sama and the country around.

[1] Called also Dzú Hâjib. [2] It was twelve cubits long and eight broad.

[3] The common tradition is that Ibn Salûba, Chief of Hîra (as a kind of neutral), constructed the bridge for both sides. The account given by Belâdzori is more probable, that it was a standing bridge belonging to Hîra, as it would be chiefly for its use. The Moslems crossed at Marwaha, near Babylon. The action must therefore have been fought on the banks of the main river, and not on the western channel.

Battle of the Bridge. Shabân, A.H. XIII. October, A.D. 634.[1]

men, there was little room to manœuvre, and nothing but the bridge to fall back upon. The unwieldy elephants, with their jingling bells and trappings, spread confusion among the Arab cavalry. The riders, however, dismounting, went bravely at them on foot, and tried, with some success, to cut the bands of the *howdas*, and drive them from the field. Abu Obeid singled out the fiercest, a white elephant, with great tusks, and rushed at it, sword in hand. While vainly endeavouring to reach some vulnerable part, the huge beast caught him with its trunk, and trampled him to death. Consternation seized the ranks at the horrid spectacle. One after another the captains whom Abu Obeid had named to meet disaster, were slain,[2] and the troops began to waver. Just at this moment, a soldier of the Beni Thackîf,[3] appalled at the fate of Abu Obeid and other leaders of his clan, ran to the bridge, and crying out, *Die, as your chiefs have died, or conquer*, cut the first boat adrift. Exit thus closed, the panic spread. The Moslems were hemmed in, and driven back upon the river. Many leaped in, but few reached the other shore of the deep swift stream.[4] At this eventful moment Mothanna rushed to the front. Backed by a few heroic

[1] Dates now begin to be given, but the chronology is still very doubtful. One authority places the battle forty days after that of Wacûsa on the Yermûk—that is to say, seven or eight weeks after Abu Bekr's death. But in the interval between that event and the present battle, there took place Abu Obeid's protracted march, the battle of Namârick and the expeditions following it, the gathering of Jabâa's army and its march, all which must have occupied at the least two months, and probably a good deal more.

[2] A marvellous vision was seen by the wife of Abu Obeid. A man descended out of heaven, having a pitcher in his hand, out of which he gave drink first to her husband, and then, one after another, to several warriors of his tribe. She told Abu Obeid, who answered that he wished it might be a token of impending martyrdom to him and them. He then appointed each of the warriors, in turn, whom she had named, to succeed him if he fell; and so it turned out. Abu Obeid cut at the *lip* of the elephant, being told (erroneously) that it was the part where a mortal blow could most easily be struck.

[3] The same clan as Abu Obeid's.

[4] The depth is as much as fifteen feet, and it runs at the rate of one and a half to three knots an hour. (Rich's *Travels*.) The banks, however, are not so high, nor is the current so rapid, as of the Tigris.

spirits, among them a Christian chief of the Beni Tay,[1] he seized the banner, and, planting himself between the enemy and the bewildered Arabs, called out that he would hold the ground till all had passed securely. Then he chided the Thackîfite for what he had done, and commanded the bridge to be restored. 'Destroy not your own selves,' he cried; 'retire in order, and I will defend you.' While thus bravely holding the Persians at bay, the thrust of a lance imbedded several rings of his armour in a deep and dangerous wound. Heedless of the pain, he stood heroically to his ground endeavouring to calm his panic-stricken men. But in vain. The confusion increased, and before order could be restored, a vast number had perished in the river. At last the native boatmen were made to refit the bridge, and a remnant escaped across it; but four thousand were either swept off by the flood, left dead upon the field, or borne wounded over the bridge. Of the new levies, two thousand, stung with remorse, fled from the terrible field, away to their homes in Arabia; and Mothanna, again assuming the command, was left with only three thousand men. After the battle, Bahmân was on the point of crossing the river to follow up his victory. Had he done so, it would have fared badly with Mothanna and the wounded disheartened remnants, who still held their ground on the opposite bank. But fortunately for them, just at that moment, news reached Bahmân of a revolt at Medâin; and so, relinquishing his design, he hastened, in support of his master, back to the distracted capital.[2] With the relics of his

The Moslems routed.

[1] The remarkable fact of a *Christian* chief, Abu Zobeid, of the Beni Tay, being, not only on the Moslem side, but taking so prominent and brave a part in the defence of the broken force, is noticed both by Ibn Athîr and Belâdzori. We shall see how largely Mothanna was indebted to Christian help in the next decisive battle.

[2] Firuzân was the name of the insurgent. But, with the exception that the nobles sacrificed the empire to intrigue and jealousies, we are much in the dark as to the inner history of Persia at this time. There were two parties, we are told, the Persians proper, or the national faction, which supported Firuzân; and the other nationalities, Rustem. But they soon coalesced.

Mothanna retires on Allîs.

army, Mothanna fell back upon Allîs, farther down the river; and there, for the time, fixing his head-quarters, bravely defended his first conquests. The cause of Islam looked dark; but a hero like Mothanna would not despair. Mindful of his early tactics, he sought to recruit his diminished ranks from the surrounding coasts; so, rallying around him the tribes of kindred race, before long he regained a firmer footing.

Jabân taken prisoner and beheaded.

Jabân, unaware of the General's hasty recall to Medâin, and supposing the Arabs to be in full flight before the conquering host, followed in pursuit. He had before been taken prisoner and obtained his ransom by deceit.[1] Crossing now the river, he was cut off by the Arabs, and, with his column, was taken prisoner by Mothanna. The people also of Allîs brought many of the stragglers into the Moslem camp. These were all beheaded. At a later period, Allîs had special grace shown it for this service.

How the tidings of defeat were received at Medîna.

Omar received with calmness the tidings of the disaster. Abu Obeid's levies kept on their flight till they reached their homes; and when those from Medîna returned there, they covered their faces with shame. The Caliph spoke comfortably to them. 'Verily,' he said, 'I am a defence to every believer that faceth the enemy and misfortune overtaketh him. The Lord have mercy on Abu Obeid, and be gracious unto him. Had he survived, and taken refuge from the foe on some sandy mound, I surely would have been his advocate and defender.' Muâdz, reciter of the Corân, was among those who fled. Shortly after, when, in the course of recitation, he came to this verse: 'Whosoever in the field shall give his back to the enemy (excepting again to join in the battle), or shall turn aside unto another party, verily he draweth the wrath of God upon him; his refuge shall be hell-fire—an evil end!'[2] And he lifted up his voice and wept. Omar addressed him kindly: 'Weep not, O

[1] See above, pp. 128, 129. [2] Sura, VIII. v. 14.

Muâdz,' he said, 'thou hast not "*turned aside unto another party*"; thou hast turned aside to none but unto me.' Such was the spirit of these Moslem heroes, even in defeat. The reverse had no other effect than to nerve the Caliph to redoubled effort; and the cry for a levy *en masse* soon resounded over the whole peninsula. The reinforcements, in response to this new call, would, however, have been too late to help Mothanna if (fortunately for Islam) earlier succour had not reached him.

Numerous levies join Mothanna in Irâc.

For the previous call, made at the time of Abu Bekr's death, was still drawing. Levies, from all directions, were daily coming in, eager (now that the ban against apostates was removed) at once to evince the sincerity of their repentance, and to share in the rewards of victory. Each band, as it came in, besought Omar that they might be sent to Syria.[1] But the late victory on the Yermûk had made him easy in that direction; and every available man must now be despatched in haste to Irâc. The Beni Bajîla, a brave and numerous levy, raised under the banner of Jarîr, urged that their ancestral relations were all with Syria; but Omar was firm, and, at last, reconciled them to set out at once for Irâc by the promise—singular in the history of the time—that they should have one fourth of the royal Fifth of all booty taken there.[2] The fugitives also, from the army of Abu

[1] The names of the tribes now flocking to the war are, many of them familiar to the reader of the Prophet's life; as the Beni Haotzala, Khâtham, Abd al Cays, Dhabha. The Beni Azd were 700 strong, under Arfaja.

These levies are represented as the response to the present summons of Omar, now made afresh after the battle of the Bridge; but erroneously so, for they reached Mothanna at once, and fought under his banner within a month of that disaster. It took some time for the fresh levies to gather, as we shall see.

[2] The history of this contingent is interesting. Mahomet had promised Jarîr that he should have a commission to gather the scattered members of the Beni Bajîla into a fighting column. Jarîr followed Khâlid into Irâc, and then returned to Medina, where he found Abu Bekr sick, or too much occupied to attend to his claim. But after his death, Omar, in fulfilment of the Prophet's promise, gave him letters to the various governors to search out everywhere those who, before Islam, belonged to the Bajîla tribe, and still desired to be associated with it. A great rendezvous of these was accordingly

Obeid, hastened back, seeking to retrieve their honour. But far the most remarkable of the levies that now gathered under Mothanna's standard—a proof, at once of his liberality, statesmanship, and wide-spread influence—was from the Beni Namr, a Christian tribe of the northern desert, which, without detriment to their faith, threw in their lot with Mothanna, and brought a large contingent to his help.[1] Thus, rapidly and largely reinforced, he was soon stronger than ever, and ready for an offensive movement. These troops were massed at first well in the rear of the enemy's country, on the edge of the Arabian desert, near Khaffân. The women and children (for the practice had now become general of carrying their families with them) were placed in security at a distance behind; some were even left with friendly citizens in Hîra, although, since the last retreat, the city had been re-occupied by a Persian satrap. Mothanna had also a trusty follower in hiding there, to give him notice of what was passing.

Mothanna advances to meet a Persian army. Ramadhân A.H. XIII. November, A.D. 634.

From this spy, Mothanna now learned that, matters having been settled at the capital, a great army was in motion against him.[2] Sending an urgent message to Jarîr, now close at hand, to hurry on, he marched forward to Boweib, on the western branch of the Euphrates, and there, close by the future site of Kûfa, and on ground commanded by a bridge, he awaited the enemy. Omar had cautioned him not again to risk his men by crossing the river before

made, at a spot between the Hejâz and Irâc, whither, yielding to the persuasion of Omar, they now bent their steps. There was rivalry between Jarîr and Arfaja as to the command of this tribe; but the levy had some grudge against Arfaja, who therefore left them and took the command of his own tribe, the Beni Azd. Arfaja is also said, by another tradition, to have led the Beni Bajila *into Syria*; but that (if true) must have been a different body of men, and at a different time.

[1] The tradition runs: 'Among those who joined Mothanna was Anis ibn Hilâl, with an immense following of the Beni Namr (Christians); for they said, *We shall surely fight on the side of our own people.*'

[2] Rustem and the insurgent Firuzân had come to a compromise, and agreed, we are told, to a division of power.

victory was secure; so he suffered Mehrân, the Persian commander, without question to defile his troops over the bridge.[1] The armies were then marshalled. The Persians advanced in three columns, an elephant surrounded by a company of footmen, at the head of each, and all with great tumult and barbaric din. It was the fast of Ramadhân; but a dispensation was given to the troops, and they had been strengthened by a repast. Mothanna, on his favourite charger (called, by the humour of his men, *the Rebel*, from its docility in action), rode along the lines, and exhorted his soldiers to quit themselves like men: 'Your valour this day will be a proverb in the mouths of all. Be still as death,' he cried; 'and if ye speak aught one to the other, speak it in a whisper. None shall give way amongst us this day. I desire no glory for myself, but the glory of you all.' And they answered him in like words; for he was beloved by his men.[2]

The Battle of Boweib.

The word for the advance was to be the *Takbîr*, 'Great is the Lord!' It was to be thrice repeated; then, on the fourth cry, the rush. But Mothanna had barely shouted the first, when the Persian myrmidons bore down in great force; and the Beni Ijl, the nearest column, broke before them. Mothanna stroked his beard in trouble. Calling an officer of his staff, he bade him hasten with this message to the wavering corps: 'The Ameer sendeth greeting, and saith, *Ye will not this day shame the Moslems!*' They gave

[1] Mehrân is called Hamadâny, because he was a native of that province. He is said, as on the former occasion, to have given Mothanna the option of crossing by the bridge.

The channel was the Bâdacla, which is here described as a spill canal to pass off the surplus waters of the Euphrates when in flood, into the *Jowf* or sea of Najaf—the same as the western branch of the river taken off (as already described) by the cut at Museyib, above Babylon. Boweib was not far from Hîra, the inhabitants of which must have been in much excitement during this and other great battles in the vicinity, on which their alternating fate depended.

[2] 'Mothanna was an example,' we are told, 'in word and deed. The people trusted and obeyed him both in what they liked and what they disliked'—a noble, single-minded commander, whose repeated supersession had no effect upon his loyalty and zeal.

answer, 'Yea, we shall not!' And, as the broken ranks closed up again in sharp serried line, Mothanna smiled approvingly. The battle raged long and equally. At last, Mothanna, seeing that a desperate onset must be made, rode up to the chief of the Beni Namr, and said to him: 'Though Christian, ye are one in blood with us; come now, and as I charge, charge ye with me.' The Persian centre quivered before the fierce onslaught, and as the dust cleared off, it was seen to be giving way. The Moslem wings, hitherto outflanked, now took heart, and charged also. Then the Persian army fell back, and made for the bridge. But Mothanna was before them. In despair, they turned on their pursuers, and the multitude was so great that again there was a moment of danger. But the fiery zeal of the Arabs, though a handful in comparison, beat back the forlorn charge. 'The enemy,' says an eye-witness, 'driven before Arfaja, were brought up by the river, and finding no escape, re-formed, and charged upon us. One cried to the leader to move his banner back; "*My work*," he answered, "*is to move the banner on.*" So forward we drove, and cut them up, not one reaching even to the river bank.' Mothanna reproached himself afterwards with having closed the bridge, and caused (on his own side) a useless loss of life. 'I made a grievous error,' he would say: 'follow not my example herein; it behoveth us not to close the way against those who may be driven to turn upon us by despair.'[1] The carnage was almost unparalleled even in the annals of Islam,

[1] 'I brought the army,' Mothanna said, 'to an evil pass by getting before the enemy and closing the bridge upon him; but the Lord graciously warded off the danger. Beware, therefore, of following my example, for verily it was a grievous lapse. It becometh us not to bar the escape of those who have nothing to fall back upon.' It will be observed that the compunction was not at all for any unnecessary bloodshed among the helpless enemy (an idea altogether foreign to the thoughts of a Moslem crusader), but of gratuitous loss and risk to the Moslems. It may have added to Mothanna's grief that in repelling this last charge he lost his brother. The slain are put at 100,000. 'Years after, even in the time of the civil wars, you could not walk across the plain without stumbling on the bones strewed all around.'

and it went on amongst the fugitives all night. A hundred warriors boasted that they had slain each ten men to his lance; and hence the battle of Boweib is sometimes called *the field of Tens*. There was no engagement of which the marks were wider or more lasting. For ages the bones of the slain bleached upon the plain; and the men of Kûfa had here, at their very door, a lasting proof at once of the prowess and the mercilessness of their forefathers in the faith.

Persian general slain by a Christian youth.

The victory is remarkable, not only for the unexampled loss of life, but also as secured in great part by the valour of the Beni Namr, a Christian tribe. And yet further, the most gallant feat of the day was achieved by the member of another Christian clan. A party of Beni Taghlib merchants, with a string of horses for sale, arriving just as the ranks were being dressed, threw themselves into the battle, choosing the Arab side. A youth from amongst them, darting into the very centre of the Persians, slew Mehrân, and leaping on his richly caparisoned horse, rode back upon it, amidst the plaudits of the whole Moslem line, crying, as he passed in triumph: 'I am of the Beni Taghlib. I am he that hath slain Mehrân.[1]

Loss on the Moslem side.

The loss on the Moslem side was considerable. Mothanna had to mourn the death of his brave brother Masûd. As this hero was borne from the field mortally wounded, he cried: 'Exalt your banners high, ye Beni Bekr.[2] The Lord will exalt you, my men; and let not my fall disturb you!' Amr, the Christian chieftain, met a similar fate. And Mothanna affectionately tended the last moments of both together—the Christian and the Moslem—an unwonted sight on these crusading fields. He performed the funeral service over his brother and the other fallen Moslems, and said in his panegyric of their heroism: 'It assuageth my grief that

[1] The horse and spoil of Mehrân were awarded to the column in which this youth was fighting. Jarîr and another had a quarrel over them. Had the youth been a Musulman, no doubt he would have obtained the whole as a prize.

[2] His own tribe, the Beni Bekr ibn Wâil.

they stood stedfast; that they yielded not a step; and now they lie here the martyrs of Boweib.'

The spoil.

The spoil was great. Immense stores of grain, as well as herds of cattle, were captured; and, therefrom, supplies were sent to the families in their desert retreat. As Amr ibn Mâdekerib rode up with these, the women, mistaking the convoy for a plundering raid, rushed out, with their wild shrill Arab scream, and began attacking them with stones and staves. Amr soon made himself known to them, and praised their courageous attitude. 'It well becometh the wives of such an army,' he said, 'thus to defend themselves.' Then he told them of the victory; 'and lo,' he added, as he produced the stores of grain, 'the first-fruits thereof!' [1]

Moslem women defend their camp.

Mesopotamia and delta regained.

The country was now ravaged without let or hindrance up to Sabât, within sight of the walls of Medâin. The enemy's garrisons were all driven back; and lower Mesopotamia and the delta anew reoccupied. Parties also scoured the country higher up. Anbâr and Khanâfis were again taken possession of, and many rich markets ransacked. They penetrated to Baghdad (then a mere village on the Tigris above the modern city), and even as far north as Tekrît. Great booty was gathered in these plundering expeditions. It was divided in the usual way, excepting that the Beni Bajîla, who well merited the distinction, received, according to promise, a fourth of the imperial Fifth, beyond their proper share—the remaining portion being sent to Medîna.[2]

[1] Amr went on with supplies to Hîra, where the rest of the families were in hiding. The female defenders of their camp remind one of Layard's description of a similar occasion on which the women of an Arab encampment rushed out to repel an attack, armed with tent-poles and pitchforks. (*Nineveh and Babylon*, p. 168.)

[2] It would unnecessarily weary the reader to detail these raids at any length. Some of them were against other and hostile branches of the very Christian tribes that had fought at the Bridge and at Boweib on the Moslem side; some were to obtain supplies for the army, which was reduced at one time to great extremities for food; but most were for the double purpose of striking terror into the people, and at the same time gaining plunder. On one occasion the Beni Bekr ransomed a great company of prisoners from the Taghlib

Mothanna superseded.

Mothanna lived but a few months after his last great victory. He never entirely recovered from the wounds received in the disastrous battle of the Bridge, and eventually succumbed under them. His merits have not been recognised as they deserve. That he did not belong to the nobility of Medîna was the misfortune which kept him in the background. Jarîr, leader of the Beni Jadîla, declined to serve under him as Ameer, or commander, in Irâc, since he was a mere Bedouin chief, and not a *Companion* of the Prophet; and he complained accordingly to the Caliph. Omar listened to the appeal; and eventually (as we shall see) appointed another commander over both. But with that opens a new chapter in the Persian war, and before entering on it, we must revert to the course of events in Syria.

Mothanna

The character of Mothanna, however, deserves more than a passing notice, and as we shall hear little of him in the short remaining period of his life, I may here devote a few lines to his memory. Among the generals who contributed to the triumph of Islam, he was second only to one. Inferior to Khâlid in dash and brilliancy of enterprise, he did not yield to him in vigour and strategic skill. Free from the unscrupulous cruelty so often disfiguring the triumphs of that great leader, he never, like him, used victory to gratify his own ends. It was due alone to the cool and desperate stand which Mothanna made at the Bridge, that the Moslem

tribe, by relinquishing their own share of the booty. One of these minor actions is called 'Anbâr *the second*'; and another 'Allîs *the second*.'

A somewhat remarkable incident shows that Omar had spies in all quarters, and also that he dreaded the outbreak of ancestral quarrels between the different Arab tribes. The garrison of Siffîn, in Mesopotamia, composed of the Beni Namr and Taghlib, were attacked by the Beni Bekr and driven out of their stronghold, over the banks into the river. In their terror they cried out, *We are drowning!* and the Beni Bekr answered, *Yea, drowning for burning!* in allusion to an occasion in former days in which the Beni Taghlib had burned alive some of the Beni Bekr tribe. Omar, learning the circumstance from his spies, demanded what this threat—founded on a pre-Islamite feud, and therefore alien from the spirit of Islam—should mean. He was told that the threat was used, not in a spirit of retaliation, but of punishment and example, and in the interests of the faith; and the explanation was accepted.

force was not utterly annihilated there; while the formation so rapidly after that disaster of a fresh army, by which, with the help of Christian tribes (rare mark of Moslem liberality), a prodigious host was overthrown, and the prestige of Islam restored—showed powers of administration and generalship far beyond his fellows. The repeated supersession of Mothanna cost the Caliphate much, and at one time rendered the survival of Islam in Irâc doubtful; but it never, in the slightest measure, affected his loyalty and devotion to Omar. The nobility of the Moslem peerage may have rendered it difficult for the Caliph to place a Bedouin chieftain of obscure origin in command of men who, as Companions, had fought under the Prophet's banner. But it is strange that no historian, jealous for the honour of the heroes of Islam, has regretted the supersession of one so distinguished, or sought to place Mothanna on the deserved pinnacle of fame, as one of the great generals of the world.[1]

[1] There is a tradition that the reason given by Omar why he set aside both Khâlid and Mothanna was 'his fear lest their influence should become too great, and lead the people to put their trust in them instead of in the Lord of Hosts.' There may, no doubt, have been some jealousy of Khâlid's influence; but there could hardly have been any of Mothanna's. Again, Omar is said to have changed his mind both in respect of Mothanna, on learning his gallant stand at the Bridge, and in respect of Khâlid, on account of his bravery at Kinnisrîn —adding that, in both, Abu Bekr had proved a better judge of character than he. Whatever foundation there may be for the tradition so far as Khâlid is concerned, it can hardly apply to Mothanna, for it was not till after the battle of the Bridge that Omar finally superseded him, by appointing Sâd to the supreme command.

CHAPTER XV.

CAMPAIGN IN SYRIA.—TAKING OF DAMASCUS. BATTLE OF FIHL.

A.H. XIV. A.D. 635.

The Syrian forces repose on the Yermûk.

AFTER the terrible slaughter of the Romans at Wacûsa, we left the Syrian forces reposing on the banks of the Yermûk. There, for some time, they were engaged in burying the dead, tending the wounded, and dividing the spoil.

Syria east of the Jordan.

The country around them, 'the land beyond Jordan on the east,' differed from any they had previously known. To the south was the undulating pasture-ground of the Belcâa, and again to the north of the Yermûk the pasture-lands of Jaulân.[1] Between these two pastoral tracts lay the hills and dales of Gilead, with their fields of wheat and barley, dotted every here and there with clumps of the shady oak, olive, and sycamore, and thickets of arbutus, myrtle, and oleander. It was emphatically 'a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills.' The landscape, diversified with green slopes and glens, is in season gay with carpeting of flowers and melody of birds. From heights not far north of the Yermûk, beyond the green expanse around, might be descried the blue waters of the Sea of Galilee sparkling in the west, and still farther the snow-capped peaks of the Lebanon and Hermon—a strange contrast to the endless

[1] The ancient Gaulonitis.

sands and stony plains of the peninsula.[1] Not less marked was the contrast with the land of Chaldæa. There the marshy delta of the Euphrates displays an almost tropical luxuriance; while above it the plains of Mesopotamia, with its network of canals, were covered by vast mounds, the site of cities teeming with life in the early cycles of the world, and strewn with fragments of pottery and bricks stamped with strange devices—mysterious records of bygone kingdoms. Here, on the contrary, the pride of the Byzantine empire was yet alive. From the Jordan to the desert were colonial cities founded by the Romans, boasting their churches, theatres, and forum. Even the naval contests of the naumachia might be witnessed in the land of Gilead. The country was populous and flourishing, inhabited by a mongrel race half Arab and half Syrian, who aspired to the privileges and aped the luxurious habits, without the chivalry and manliness, of the Roman citizen. It was altogether a civilisation of forced and exotic growth. No sooner was the western prop removed than the people returned to their Bedouin life, true sons of the desert; the chariot and waggon were banished for the camel; and nothing left of Roman rule but columns and peristyles, causeways and aqueducts—great masses of ruined masonry which still startle the traveller as if belonging to another world. But, at the time we write of, the age of so-called civilisation was still dominant there.

Highway between Syria and Arabia.

Such was the beautiful country, strange to the peninsular Arab, both in its natural features and in its busy urban life, which was now traversed by the Moslem armies, and soon became the beaten highway between Syria and Arabia.

After achieving the victory of Wacûsa, Khâlid delivered

[1] The landscape between the Haurân and the Jordan is well described by Laurence Oliphant, *Land of Gilead*, p. 62. See also Chesney's *Euphrates Expedition* (London, 1850), vol. i. pp. 512–515, where he speaks of the nightingale in these parts.

over to Abu Obeida the despatch from the new Caliph, which (as we have related) was put into his hands at the commencement of the action, and with it surrendered the commission which he held from Abu Bekr.[1] The other leaders were all confirmed in their commands by Omar.

Abu Obeida succeeds Khâlid. A.H. XIII. Sept. A.D. 634.

The affront put upon him by Omar did not damp the zeal or devotion of Khâlid. He placed himself forthwith at the command of Abu Obeida, who published with reluctance the order for his deposition.[2] Abu Obeida knew full well the rare military genius of Khâlid; and, himself of a mild and unwarlike turn, was wise and magnanimous enough to ask, and as a rule implicitly to follow, his advice. Khâlid, nobly putting aside his grievance, devoted his best energies to the cause; and, his supersession notwithstanding, remained thus virtually the chief captain of Islam in Syria.

Khâlid loyally supports Abu Obeida.

The course of Moslem victory in Syria advanced with little let or check. In Persia the struggle was not to save a

[1] The effect of Omar's order depends on the nature of Abu Bekr's commission. It is usually held that the commanders of the several columns were at the first independent, and that Khâlid held a similar position in respect of the Irâc contingent, till on the eve of the great engagement, he persuaded the rest to come temporarily under his supreme command—a fact, of course, unknown to Omar when issuing his order of deposition. If so, Abu Obeida would, by Omar's order, have simply superseded Khâlid in taking command of the Irâc troops in addition to his own. On the other hand, it is held by some that the commission given by Abu Bekr to Khâlid was that of generalissimo; and that to this supreme command Abu Obeida succeeded, in addition to that of his own proper column and of Khâlid's. This is the more probable, since Abu Obeida was certainly recognised thereafter as commander-in-chief in Syria. It is, however, inconsistent with the story of separate commands; but, see previous note, p. 111.

Tradition is still very shifty and uncertain. According to Belâdzori, it is even held that the order of supersession was not received till the siege of Damascus; but this seems improbable.

[2] It is said by some that Abu Obeida, though he received the order on the Yermûk, yet held it back till after the siege of Damascus. But this is out of the question. Had Abu Obeida not been supreme on that occasion, Damascus would not have been allowed to capitulate. It was with difficulty that Khâlid, even in his subordinate position, was prevented from treating the city as taken by storm, which he certainly would have done had he been supreme; and in that case all the property, as well as the inhabitants and buildings, would have been at the mercy of the captors.

Byzantine struggle in Syria faint-hearted.

limb, but life itself. Here it was otherwise. Syria, indeed, contained the holy places and all that was dearest to the Byzantine people as the cradle of their faith. But, after all, it was, though fair and sacred, but an outlying province, of which a cowardly, supine, and selfish court could without vital injury afford the loss. There were, accordingly, no such mortal throes in Syria as on the plains of Chaldæa.

Abu Obeida advances on Damascus.

Leaving a strong detachment on the Yermûk to keep communications open with the south, the invading army resumed its march towards Damascus. On the way, news reached them that the city had been reinforced, and also that in Palestine the scattered fragments of the defeated army had re-formed in the valley of the Jordan, thus threatening the Moslem rear. The moment was critical, and Abu Obeida wrote for orders to the Caliph. The command of Omar was to strike a decisive blow at Damascus. The citadel of Syria gained, the rest was sure. Accordingly, a strong column under Abul Aûr and other veteran leaders was sent back to hold in check the enemy on the Jordan, while the main body advanced by the military road to Damascus.

Damascus.

This city, founded before the days of Abraham,[1] enjoys the singular pre-eminence of having survived, through all the vicissitudes of dynasties and nations, the capital of Syria. The Ghûta, or great plain on which it stands, is watered by the Barada and other streams issuing from the Lebanon and adjoining mountain ranges; and the beautiful groves and rich meadows around have given it (perhaps with a better title than the delta of the Euphrates) the name of 'the garden of the world.' An *entrepôt* of commerce between the East and West, it has from age to age, with varying fortune, been ever rich and populous. The city wall, twenty feet high and fifteen broad, still displays in many places stones of cyclopean size, which must have been vener-

[1] Gen. xv. 2. 'The steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus.'

able ages even before our era. Turrets for defence are placed at stated intervals, and over the gates and at other spots there are structures to accommodate the garrison on duty. The Eastern gate still leads into 'the street which is called Straight,' as it did in the days when St. Paul passed through it.[1] The Cathedral church of St. John the Baptist rears its great dome, towering above the other buildings; and besides it there were, at the time of the invasion, fifteen churches in Damascus and its suburbs. The city, not long before, suffered severely from the alternating fortunes of the Persian war; but it had now, in great measure, recovered its prosperity.

Such was the capital of Syria, 'the Queen of Cities,' which—embedded in groves and gardens, and hemmed in (excepting towards the eastern desert) with distant but lofty mountains, some tipped with snow—now burst on the gaze of the Arab warriors. One here and there amongst them may perchance have visited it, trading to the north; but, as a whole, the army had heard of it only by report; and in beauty, richness, and repose, fancy could hardly have exceeded the scene which now lay before them.

The city invested. Shawwâl, A.H. XIII. Decemb er, A.D. 634.

The Arab force was strong enough to invest the city. Abu Obeida pitched his headquarters opposite the Gate of Jâbia, on the western plain. Khâlid was posted at the Eastern entrance,[2] where the gateway was strengthened by

[1] The window from which St. Paul was let down, no doubt stood in one of these military structures, or casemates, upon the wall. Tradition still points out the window, 'although the wall itself has been several times rebuilt.' (Robinson's *Palestine*, p. 466. Damascus is described, pp. 443 *et seq.*) There is an admirable account of the city given by H. von Kremer, in his vol. i. ch. iv., *Damascus und der Hof der Omejjaden.*

The Eastern gateway here mentioned is built of great masses of reddish sandstone, well polished. The arch is rounded, and there are two portals at the sides for foot-passengers. The main archway, intended for camels, &c., is now closed. The 'Straight street,' only fifteen feet wide, still runs right across the city, from this gate to the Jâbia gate, on the west. There are several other similar gateways in the great wall.

[2] For the Eastern gate invested by Khâlid, see Von Kremer, p. 210. Amru sat before the Bâb Tûma, to the N.E.; Shorahbîl before the Bâb

the remains of an ancient temple. The other gates were similarly guarded. Battering-rams and testudos were drawn up against the walls; but every attempt at a breach of the massive defences failed. At first the citizens, ignorant of the ardour and persistence inspired by the faith of Mahomet, regarded the attack as a desultory raid like many that had preceded it, and looked for succour. The city lies two thousand feet above the sea, and the severity of the cold in spring would drive away the Arab tribes, used to a more genial climate. But months slipped by, and the host still hung obstinately around the walls. The Emperor, indeed, from Hims, attempted a diversion; but Dzul Kelâa, posted with his Himyarite horse to the north of the city, kept them at bay; and Abu Obeida detached another column to cover the siege from annoyance on the side of Palestine. The summer was coming on, and no relief appeared. The Moslems, instead of retiring, pressed their attack with increasing vigour; and the hopes of the Damascenes melted away into despair.[1]

Storm and capitulation. A.H. XIV. Summer, A.D. 635.

On a certain day, we are told, the Roman Governor made a feast to the garrison to celebrate the birth of a son.[2] They ate and drank, and, relaxing into merriment, began to quit their posts. Khâlid knew of the expected feast, for nothing escaped his vigilance. 'He neither himself slumbered, nor suffered others to fall asleep.' And so, reckoning upon the season of revelry, he had settled with Abu Obeida to seize it as the occasion for a general assault. The defences on Khâlid's

Farâdîs, to the north; and Yezîd patrolled from 'the Lesser Gate to the gate Al Hoisan.'

[1] The length of the siege is variously given at seventy days by Tabari, and six months by Wâckidy. The latter, indeed, places the capitulation in autumn, a month or two before the battle of Câdesîya, which was fought in November; but this leaves too little time for intervening events. The order of events was as follows. The city was first invested probably early in the spring; it capitulated in the summer; then followed the battle of Fihl; after which Khâlid's contingent was sent back to Irâc, and appeared on the field of Câdesîya just as the contest was proceeding.

[2] He is called by some Nastûs, by others Bahân. The latter is the name of the general who inflicted on Khâlid ibn Saîd his severe defeat.

side were by far the most formidable; the moat was deeper there, and the walls stronger. The garrison, holding the spot to be impregnable, were less on the alert than elsewhere; and in their negligence Khâlid found his opportunity. In concert with certain daring spirits, his comrades from Irâc, he planned an escalade. Ladders were got in readiness, and scaling ropes with nooses to catch the projections of the castellated wall. In the darkness preceding dawn, they stealthily crossed the moat upon inflated skins;[1] then, casting up their tackle, they caught the battlements. Cacâa, with another hero[2] from Irâc, was the first to gain the summit. The way thus silently secured, others scaled rapidly. Right and left they surprised the slumbering pickets by a sudden rush, and put them to the sword. The gate from within was forced open, and the appointed cry '*Allah Akbar!*' resounded from the walls to the expectant troops without. The Roman soldiery, panic-struck, fled before their assailants; and now through the gateway Khâlid's column poured in, slaying and sacking all around. They had already penetrated near to the centre of the city, when their progress was brought to an unwelcome end. For on the other side a very different scene was taking place. The Governor, seeing that resistance to an assault apprehended from every quarter was hopeless, had issued from the western gate, and already tendered his submission to Abu Obeida. Terms were made upon the spot, and the capitulation signed. The gates were thrown open, and the Moslem force, unopposed, kept streaming in from the western camp. As they advanced, cries of despair and appeals to stay the carnage met the ears of Abu Obeida, who was no sooner apprised of what had transpired in the eastern quarter than he sent orders to stay the onslaught. Khâlid remonstrated that the city had been fairly carried

[1] Von Kremer describes the moat surrounding the walls as still from ten to fifteen feet in breadth. It is filled with water from the Barada.

[2] Madzûr.

by assault, and was at their mercy; but in vain. Abu Obeida, juster and more clement, pointed to the treaty, and insisted that its provisions should be fulfilled. Good faith was the best as well as justest policy. The people were conciliated, and throughout Syria the capitulation of Damascus became the type of surrender.[1]

Terms of capitulation.

One half of all the property, both in money and buildings, private and public, was by this capitulation surrendered to the conquerors. Besides the taxes levied under Byzantine rule, the tribute of one dinar was imposed on every male adult who did not embrace Islam, and a measure of corn was taken from every field.[2] In this way the Arabs gained, not only large spoil and a permanent revenue, without entirely alienating the people, and even with a show of moderation, but obtained also possession of buildings sufficient for their own accommodation and for the conduct of public business. And so this beautiful city, 'the Eye of the East,' passed from the grasp of Heraclius into the hands of the Caliph, and became 'the Eden of Islam.'

The churches of Damascus shared the common fate; they were equally distributed between the Christians and

[1] The ordinary account is that Khâlid, hearing the merriment of the feast, stormed the city on his side, unknown to the rest of the army, and that the garrison, when overcome, hastened to conclude a capitulation with Abu Obeida on the other side. But this is incredible. When the victorious column, in possession of the eastern quarter, were pushing their way through the city, it would have been altogether too late. It is of course possible that Khâlid, knowing that the treaty was impending, sought thus to anticipate the consequences of capitulation, by which the city was lost as a prey, and its inhabitants as prisoners of war. On the other hand, some traditions ascribe the acceptance of the surrender and the treaty to Khâlid himself. But the account I have given is the most probable and consistent.

Later authorities tell of treachery on the part of a bishop, who, from the walls, held converse with Khâlid, and having obtained for himself terms, pointed out the place for an escalade, &c.; also that Khâlid was supplied with scaling ladders by a monastery in the Ghûta. Such tales rest generally on weak and unreliable authority; but as regards the last, the monks, we are told, obtained a permanent reduction of the land-tax for the service now rendered. (See Belâdzori, p. 121.)

[2] From every jarîb, or local acre.

the conquerors. The Cathedral church of St. John the Baptist was treated differently. It was divided into two parts—in one half the rites of the ancient faith were still celebrated, and the gospel of Jesus read; in the other half, carefully detached, the Corân was recited, and the service of Islam observed; while from the dome the Muedzzin proclaimed daily the supremacy of the Arabian prophet.[1] For seventy or eighty years the great Cathedral continued thus to blend under one roof the symbols and the practice of the two religions. That which was reasonable in the first beginnings of Islam, however, became intolerable in the rapid advance of arrogance and bigotry. One and another of the Caliphs sought, by the offer of large payments, to obtain surrender of the entire Cathedral; but in vain. At last Welîd, about the ninetieth year of the Hegira, took the law into his own hands, and summarily ejected the Christian worshippers. They complained against the injustice of the act, and Omar II. listened to their reclamation. But the doctors of Islam declared it impossible to restore to Christian worship a place once consecrated by the Idzân and the prayers of the Faithful; and so at last the Christians consented to take, instead, the churches of the city and its suburbs which had been confiscated under the equal partition of Abu Obeida. All that appeared Christian, therefore, in the style or decoration of the Cathedral church, was now removed or defaced. But this wonderful edifice retains to the present day marks of the different religions to which it has been from time to time devoted. In the massive foundations may be

Cathedral of St. John the Baptist turned into a Mosque.

[1] It has been supposed that the column of Khâlid had reached the Cathedral and taken possession of one half, before he was recalled, and hence this arrangement. But it is not so; the surrender of one half was stipulated irrespective of his attack, and (in conformity with the treaty in other matters) as a fair concession to the conquering army. Corresponding arrangements were made for the division of the churches in other cities of Syria, which capitulated without an assault; but it was only in Damascus that the difficulty as to disposing of the Cathedral occurred.

traced its origin as a pagan Temple; these are surmounted by the beautiful architecture and embellishment of Byzantine art; and over the great entrance may still be deciphered, clear and uninjured, the grand prophecy of the Psalmist, which yet may be realised in the worship of the Temple itself:—

> THY KINGDOM, O CHRIST, IS A KINGDOM OF ALL AGES; AND THY DOMINION IS FROM GENERATION
>
> TO GENERATION.[1]

Romans at Beisân held in check by Abul Aûr at Fihl. A.H. XIV. Spring, A.D. 634.

All through the protracted siege of Damascus, Abul Aûr kept watch over his enemy in the Ghôr, or Valley of the Jordan, near to Fihl. This city, the ancient Pella, was situated on the eastern slope of the valley, six or seven miles below the outlet of the Lake of Tiberias. Ruins still mark the site, which is 600 feet above the river bed. The gorge of the Jordan is here broad and fertile, and the stream at many places fordable. Opposite Fihl the valley of Jezreel, branching off from Esdräelon, that great battle-field of the world, issues into the Ghôr. The broad opening is guarded on one side by the mountains of Gilboa, the scene of Saul's disaster, and on the other by the frowning eminence of Beisân, to the walls of which the Philistines

[1] The following is the inscription as copied by Von Kremer, who gives a minute description of this most interesting structure. It is the Septuagint version of Psalm cxlv. 13, with the addition only of the words, *O Christ*:—

> Η . ΒΑCΙΑΕΙΑ . CΟΥ $\overline{\text{ΧΕ}}$ ΒΑCΙΑΕΙΑ . ΠΑΝΤΩΝ . ΤΩΝ ΑΙΟΝΩΝ . ΚΑΙ . Η . ΔΕCΠΟΤΙΑ . CΟΥ . ΕΝ . ΠΑCΗ . ΓΕΝΕΑΙ
>
> ΚΑΙ ΓΕΝΕΑΙ.

Belâdzori tells us that Muâvia and Abd al Malik both desired to take the portion occupied by the Christians as a church into the Mosque, and offered them any sum they chose to ask in compensation; but they stood by the terms of the capitulation, and refused. It was reserved for Welîd I., son of Abd al Malik, to seize the building. When he summoned masons to demolish the partition-wall, they demurred, saying that whoever touched a church became an idiot. Whereupon Welîd took the pick-axe into his own hand, and commenced the work of demolition. (Belâdzori, p. 125.)

I have given all the particulars I could find in the early and reliable traditions regarding the siege and capitulation. The tales and romances of later days are altogether without foundation.

fastened the body of that unfortunate monarch.[1] The mountain streams here run along the valley, rendering it when neglected sodden and swampy.[2] It was under the shadow of Beisân that the broken army of the Romans took refuge, and here fresh supports from Heraclius joined them. To secure their front, they dammed the streams, and so turned the whole vale into a marsh. At first the Arabs chafed under the stratagem, for their horses were disabled on the yielding ground. But they soon learned patience, and discovered that the enemy had shut himself out from the Ghôr, as well as from their attack. Himself securely posted, his rear open to reinforcements, supplied in plenty by the fertile vale of the Jordan, from which the Romans were cut off—Abul Aûr was content to wait till the summer heat should dry up the quagmire; and meanwhile his enemy, 80,000 strong, was held in check, if not virtually blockaded.[3]

Abu Obeida returns to attack Fihl. A.H. XIV. Summer, A.D. 634.[4]

The summer was well advanced before the Arabs broke up their camp at Damascus. They were eager to attack Heraclius at Hims; but Omar forbade them to advance, so long as there was an army in their rear. Leaving, therefore, Yezîd son of Abu Sofiân, with a garrison of Yemen levies, as Governor of Damascus, Abu Obeida hastened back with

[1] I Samuel xxxi. 7, *et seq.* *Beth-Shan* became by contraction *Beisân*. The classical name was Scythopolis, once a noble city, the seat of a bishop and convents, and the birthplace of Cyril and Basilides. Here Alexander Jannæus had his interview with Cleopatra; and Pompey took it as well as Pella, on his way from Damascus to Judæa. Pella has a special interest for us, as the spot where the Christians took refuge when Titus attacked Judæa. Both cities were at the time of our history populous and flourishing. (See Robinson's *Palestine*, pp. 325 *et seq.*)

[2] 'The whole plain was now so full of fountains and rivulets as to be in some places almost a marsh. (*Ibid.* pp. 325, 327.)

[3] The Roman army was so shut in, that their blockade is called 'the *first siege* in Syria'; the second being that of Damascus. The numbers of the enemy are, no doubt, as elsewhere, exaggerated.

[4] Some accounts place the battle of Fihl at the close of A.H. XIII., and therefore prior to the sieges of Damascus, in which city they say that the broken army of the Romans took refuge. But the chronology in Tabari is clearly as I have given it. The sequence of events is governed by the battle of Câdesîya, which took place in October or November, A.H. XIV., after the Irâc contingent had been dismissed from Syria.

the rest of his army to Fihl. The province of the Jordan had been given by Omar in command to Shorahbîl, and to him therefore Abu Obeida now committed the chief conduct of the campaign which lay within his jurisdiction. Khâlid led the van; Abu Obeida himself commanded one of the wings, and Amru the other; the famous warrior Dhirâr directed the cavalry, and Iyâdh the foot.[1] Retracing their steps, they took the highway to Palestine, and, recrossing the Yermûk near where it falls into the Jordan by the hot springs of Omm Keis (or Gadara), marched down the valley of the Ghôr, and encamped under Fihl.[2] Abul Aûr, who had held the enemy in check for so long a time, was now detached on a similar duty towards Tiberias, to prevent diversion from that quarter. The main army, taking his place, sat before Beisân, and continued patiently its blockade.

Battle of Fihl.

Mistaking inaction for remissness, and themselves reduced to straits, the Byzantine army, on a certain morning, thought to fall upon the Arabs unawares. They little knew the vigilance of Shorahbîl, who night and day was on the watch ready for action. Fetching a circuit, the Romans suddenly appeared on the Moslem flank. They met a warm reception, and there ensued a battle as fierce and obstinate as any that had yet taken place. All day the Romans held their ground; but by nightfall the impetuosity of the Arabs had its way. Sacalâr, the Byzantine captain, fell, and his army broke and fled. The greater part, caught in the marsh, there met their fate; and few escaped the sword. 'Thus the Lord wrought for his people,' writes the pious crusader; 'and the morass which we thought a curse turned in His hands into a blessing.' And so the plain of Esdraelon again looked down upon another great and sanguinary conflict, which, following on the defeat of Wacûsa, decided for many a long century the fate of Syria.

[1] It is of Dhirâr that so many marvellous tales are told in the romances of Wâckidy and others.

The loss of the Mussulmans was comparatively small. The booty was immense, and served to sharpen the Arab appetite for further victory.

Khâlid's contingent sent back to Irâc.

No enemy now was left in sight. Omar, therefore, remembering the last behest of Abu Bekr, that when the Lord gave victory in Syria the contingent of Khâlid should be sent back to Irâc, gave orders accordingly. Its ranks, thinned by the fighting they had undergone, were before the march made up to their former strength by transfer of volunteers from the Syrian army. Thus recruited, the contingent (under command, not now of Khâlid, but of Hâshim, son of Otba) recrossed the desert just in time to take part in the great battle of Câdesîya. Abu Obeida, with Khâlid and other chiefs of note, returned to Damascus. Shorahbîl and Amru were left to reduce to order the province of the Jordan. The task was easy. The fire of patriotism had never burned brightly anywhere in Syria; and what there might have been was now extinguished by the listless cowardice of the Byzantine Court. To the Bedouin class, weary of Roman trammels, the prospect of an Arabian rule was far from unwelcome. Neither were the Jews and Samaritans unfavourable to the invaders; indeed, we find them not infrequently giving aid and information to the enemy. Even the Christians cared little for the maintenance of a government which by courtly and ecclesiastical intolerance had done its best to alienate their affection.

Province of Jordan reduced.

Progress east of the Jordan.

Beisân for some time held out; but the garrison, when their sallies had been repeatedly repulsed with slaughter, at last capitulated. Tiberias followed its example, and both obtained the terms of Damascus. Adzraât,[1] Ammân, Jerash, Maâb, and Bostra, all tendered their submission. And so the whole tract from the Jordan eastward to the Haurân and the desert, was brought under control, and garrisons were distributed throughout the leading towns.

[1] Bithynia.

and in Central Syria.

Yezîd extended similarly his authority from Damascus towards the desert as far as Tadmor. Westward he deputed his brother Muâvia, who, meeting little opposition, reduced Sidon and Beyrût, and pushed his conquests as far north as Arca.[1] Damascus itself, largely occupied by Arabs, quickly assumed the garb of a Moslem city. The Byzantine power and influence lingered longer on the coast; and once and again, from seaward, they retook what the Arabs had gained. It was not, indeed, until the Mussulmans began to cope with the naval forces of the Mediterranean, that their authority was riveted along the littoral, as it had long been in the interior.

Bareness of Syrian tradition.

The conquests of Syria have reached us, as I have before said, in a form vague and most perfunctory. With the court of Damascus, its early local traditions almost entirely disappeared; while those of the East preserved by the learned coteries of Kûfa, Bussora, and Baghdad, alone have reached us with any fulness and accuracy. In this we may see a reason for the comparative bareness of tradition in respect of the early history of Damascus and the rest of Syria under Moslem rule.

Leaving for the present Abu Obeida and Khâlid to make their advance on Hims, we must return again to stirring scenes on the plains of Chaldæa.

[1] North of Tripoli.

CHAPTER XVI.

YEZDEGIRD SUCCEEDS TO THE THRONE OF PERSIA.—BATTLE OF CADESIYA.

A.H. XIV. A.D. 635.

Profuseness of tradition regarding field of Câdesîya.

THE desperate field of Câdesîya has been described to us with almost as profuse detail as the leading battles of the the Prophet. The length and severity of the contest, its memorable results, and the proximity of the ground to Kûfa, made it a favourite topic of discourse at that grand centre of tradition. Hence the prolixity. We shall follow the outline only of the story, avoiding the detail with which it has been overlaid.

Yezdegird made king of Persia. A.H. XIII. December, A.D. 634.

We left Mothanna, after the battle of Boweib, ravaging at pleasure the terror-stricken coasts of Chaldæa. In the alternations of war, another wave from the opposite quarter was about to sweep over that unhappy land. A new movement was taking place at Medâin. The Persian nobles, scandalised at the weakness of Rustem and the feeble Queen, began to cry out that he was dragging the empire down to ruin. The ladies of the court were assembled to inquire whether any king might not yet be discovered of the royal blood. At last there was found Yezdegird, saved as a child from the massacre of Siroes, and now a youth of twenty-one.[1] He was placed upon the throne. Around the young King the nobles rallied loyally, and something of the old fire of the empire was rekindled. Troops were

[1] He was the son of Shahryâr and grandson of Kesra. His mother was of the house of Baduria.

gathered, Mesopotamia was reoccupied, and the cities as far as Hîra and the desert strongly garrisoned.

Mothanna forced to fall back. Dzul Cada, A.H. XIII. January, A.D. 635.

The inhabitants returned to their ancient allegiance; and Mothanna, finding the whole Sawâd in arms, and his diminished army unable to cope with the rising, again withdrew, and concentrated his troops behind the Euphrates. He sent an urgent message, telling of the new perils threatening him, to Omar. The danger was met bravely by the Caliph. 'I swear by the Lord,' he cried, when the tidings reached him, 'that I will smite down the princes of Persia with the sword of the princes of Arabia.' It was clearly impossible to hold any part of Mesopotamia or the delta of the Euphrates, so long as they were dominated close at hand by the court of Persia on the banks of the Tigris. The capital must be taken at any cost, and an army large enough gathered for the purpose. Orders, more stringent even than those before, went forth (as we have already seen) for a new and universal levy. 'Hasten to me,' he wrote in all directions, 'hasten speedily!' And forthwith Arabia resounded again with the call to arms. The troops from the south were to gather before the Caliph at Medîna; those nearer to Syria, the demand being urgent and time precious, were to march straight to Mothanna. This much arranged, Omar set out on the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. On his return, he repaired to the rendezvous at Jorf, where the contingents as they came in were marshalled. In a council of war, it was debated whether the Caliph, as he proposed, and as the people wished, should in person lead the army to Irâc. The chief 'Companions' were against it.[1] Defeat, if Omar were on the field of battle, might be fatal; but seated at Medîna, even under the worst disaster, he could launch column after column on the enemy. Omar yielded; and, whatever may have been his real intention,

Omar orders another levy *en masse*.

Dzul Hijj. A.H. XIII. February, A.D. 635.

[1] Such as Aly, Talha, Zobeir, and Abd al Rahmân.

the show of readiness to bear the heat and burden of the day imparted a new impulse of enthusiasm to the army.

Sád appointed commander in Irâc.

Who now should be the leader of this great army in Irâc? Mothanna and Jarîr, already there, were but Bedouin chieftains. None but a peer could take command of the Companions and Nobles of the land now flocking to the field. The matter was being discussed in an assembly, when at the moment there came a despatch from Sád son of Abu Wackkâs, the Caliph's lieutenant with the Beni Hawâzin, reporting the levy of a thousand good lances from that tribe. 'Here is the man!' cried those around. 'Who?' asked the Caliph. 'None but the *Ravening Lion*,'[1] was the answer; 'Sád, the son of Mâlik.' The choice was sealed by acclamation; and so, Omar immediately summoned Sád. Converted at Mecca while yet a boy, the new Ameer of Irâc was now forty years of age. He is known as 'the first who drew blood in Islam,' and was a noted archer in the Prophet's wars. He took rank also as the nephew of Mahomet's mother. Short and dark, with large head and shaggy hair, Sád was brave, but not well-favoured. The Caliph gave him such advice as the momentous issues of the campaign demanded, and warned him not to trust to his extraction. 'The Lord,' he said, 'looketh to merit and good works, not to birth; for in His sight all men are equal.'[2] Thus admonished, Sád set out for Irâc, with 4,000 men, the first-fruits of the new levy. As a rule, they marched now with their women and children.

As the levies kept coming in, Omar sent them on,

[1] A play upon the name *Sád*, or 'lion.' His ordinary patronymic was ibn Abu Wackkâs. (For his early history, see *Life of Mahomet*, pp. 63, 68.)

When Mahomet got excited in battle, he used a form of adjuration to Sád, which he is said never to have addressed to any other;—'*By the life of my father and mother*, shoot, O Sád.' Sád died A.D. 55, worth 250,000 dirhems.

[2] Tradition puts into Omar's mouth a set speech; but it has evidently been framed for the occasion. We are also told that in the levies which defiled before Omar were the (future) murderer of Othmân, and also the assassin of Aly; and that Omar was observed to shrink back as they passed—a touch of the proleptic and marvellous, now rare in the matter-of-fact narratives of this period.

Sád marches to Irâc and encamps on the border of the desert.

one after another, to join Sád. The numbers swelling rapidly embraced the chivalry of Arabia. Toleiha, the *quondam* prophet, now an exemplary believer, and Amr ibn Mádekerib, went in command of their respective tribes, the Beni Asad and Zobeid; and Omar wrote that each chief was himself worth a thousand men. Al Asháth, also, head of the Beni Kinda, the apostate rebel of the south, now joined the army with a column of his tribe from Yemen.[1] Indeed, Omar, we are told, 'left not a single person of any note or dignity in the land, whether warrior, poet, orator, or chieftain, nor any man possessed of horse or weapons, but he sent him off to Irâc.' Thus reinforced, Sád found himself at the head of 20,000 men; and when the column ordered back from Syria returned, the numbers were over 30,000—by far the largest force yet mustered by the Arabs on the plains of Chaldæa.[2] The troops now marching on Irâc, and those that had been commanded by Mothanna, drew all together at Sherâf, on the borders of the desert, fifteen or twenty miles to the south of Hira.

Death of Mothanna. Safar, A.H. XIV April, A.D. 635.

Before Sád reached the rendezvous, Mothanna had passed away. Omar entirely approved his having withdrawn from Mesopotamia, to the right bank of the Euphrates, and there rallied the Bedouin tribes along the lower

[1] Repentant rebel chiefs could thus lead their own tribes, though they could not take a general command, or the command of a column comprising 'Companions' in its ranks. Each of these leaders had an allowance of 2,000 dirhems. Amr ibn Mádekerib, who was a great gourmand, said to Omar: 'A thousand for this side (slapping one side of his stomach), and a thousand for that (slapping the other); but what for this?' (slapping the middle). Omar laughed, and gave him 500 more, at the same time exclaiming (in admiration of his stalwart frame), 'Praised be the Lord who hath created such a one as Amr!'

[2] The statements as to the numbers in the different columns vary. After the battle of the Bridge, most of the recruits from Medîna (Omar's first levy) had fled, and left Mothanna alone with the Bedouin contingents, mainly from the Bekr and Rabia tribes, belonging to the N.E. of Arabia. He was then reinforced, by Omar's command, with new levies from the northern tribes of the Beni Tay, Codhâa, Bajîla, &c.; and could thus show, at the battle of Bowsib, a rank and file of some 8,000 men. Then Sád brought 8,000 more, and fresh contingents kept trooping up from Yemen and the south; so that, with the Syrian levies, which arrived during the battle of Câdesîya, he had in all 30,000 men.

waters skirting the desert.[1] This was all the more necessary, as the court of Persia was then endeavouring to detach the great tribe of the Beni Bekr ibn Wâil by an appeal to their ancient alliance with the house of Hîra. Moänna, brother of Mothanna, had just returned from a mission to this (his own) tribe, and had succeeded in frustrating the attempt. Bearing intelligence of this success, as well as the melancholy tidings of his brother's death, he went out to meet Sád on his march. He communicated also his brother's dying message to the new commander, advising that the Arabs should hold to their ground on the confines of the desert. 'Fight there the enemy' were the last words of Mothanna;—'Ye will be the victors; and, even if worsted, ye will still have the friendly and familiar desert wastes behind: there the Persians cannot enter, and from thence ye will again return to the attack.' Sád, as he received the message, blessed the memory of the great general. He also made the family he had left his special care; and, the more effectually to discharge the trust, as well as to mark his estimate of the man, he, in true Arab fashion, took to wife his widow Selma.

Sád marshals his troops in new order.

The army was marshalled by Sád anew. Companies were formed of ten, each under a selected leader. Warriors of note were appointed to bear the standards. Columns and battalions were made up by clans and tribes; and so by clans and tribes they marched, and also went into the field of battle. Departments also were established for the several services incident to a campaign.[2] The chief commands

[1] The Beni Rabia and Modhar, *i.e.* clans of northern lineage.

[2] Of the constitution of companies, Tabari says that 'it was according to the practice of the Prophet, and the system followed at the establishment of the civil (pension) list.' The first allusion is not clear, for Mahomet made no such disposition of his soldiers. The second points to the enrolment, shortly after made by Omar, of the whole Arab race, according to descent. The organisation of commands was very simple. First, there was the *Ameer*, or commander-in-chief, responsible to the Caliph alone; immediately under the Ameer were the generals commanding the centre, the wings, and brigades, van- and rear-guards; between the generals and the decemvirs there was no intermediate grade.

were all given to veterans, who had fought under the Prophet's banner; for in this army there were no fewer than 1,400 Companions, and ninety-nine who had fought at Bedr.[1] Following Mothanna's counsel, which was confirmed by Omar, Sâd marched slowly to Odzeib, still on the border of the desert. Leaving the women and children there under protection of a squadron of horse, he advanced to Câdesîya. Here was a great plain washed on its eastern side by the 'old' Euphrates,[2] and bounded on the west by the *Khandac*, or Trench of Sapor (in those days a running stream), with the desert beyond. The plain was traversed by a road from the south, which here crossed the river by a bridge of boats leading to Hîra, and onwards across the peninsula to Medâin. Such was the field on which the great battle was to be fought that would settle the fate of Persia. Sâd, keeping still to the western bank of the Great River, fixed his head-quarters at Codeis, a small fortress overlooking the stream a little way below the bridge. He had thus the great plain behind him on which to deploy his troops, with the river in front, and the *Khandac* and desert in his rear. Here encamped, the army awaited patiently the enemy's approach.

Encamps at Câdesîya. A.H. XIV. Summer, A.D. 635.

Rustem sought to play the same waiting game; but the King grew impatient. The Arabs, from their standing camp, made continual raids across the river into Mesopotamia, and as far north as Anbâr. The castles of the nobles were attacked, and their pleasure-grounds laid waste. A marriage procession fell into the hands of one of these parties near Hîra, and the bride, a satrap's daughter, was carried, with

Yezdegird, impatient at the ravages of the Arabs, orders advance.

[1] 'Companions' here include all men who had seen and conversed with the Prophet. The number of these now present was an altogether new feature in the army of Irâc, hitherto mainly comprised of Bedouins. Of the Companions, there were over 310 who had joined Mahomet before the 'Tree of Fealty' (*Life*, ch. xix.); 300 who had been under his banner at the taking of Mecca; and 700 sons of Companions. We have had no such detail for any previous engagement. It foreshadows the coming classification of Omar's civil list.

[2] So called *Al Atîck*, as before explained. The *Khandac* here approaches within a few miles of that channel.

her train of maids and wedding trousseau, captive to the camp. Herds were driven from the fens and pastures of the delta, to supply the army; for the forays were meant at once to furnish food, and to punish such as had thrown off their allegiance to the Moslems. The people were clamorous; and the great landholders at last gave notice to the court that if help were delayed, they must go over to the enemy. Moved by their cries, Yezdegird turned a deaf ear to Rustem, and insisted on an immediate advance.[1]

Yezdegird summoned by a deputation of Arab chiefs to embrace Islam.

Meanwhile, Sád maintained a constant correspondence with the Caliph, who now called for a description of the country. 'Câdesîya,' Sád told him in reply, 'lay between the Trench of Sapor and the river; in front of the army was the deep stream, which on the left meandered through a verdant vale towards the town of Hira; a canal led up in the same direction to the lake of Najaf, on the margin of which stood the palace of Khawarnac. His right was guarded by an impassable swamp, and his rear rested on the *Khandac* and the desert.'[2] Omar, satisfied with his

[1] Some of these raiding expeditions are described at considerable length by tradition, which, now becoming prolific, loves to dwell on all the accompaniments of this great battle. An expedition sent for cattle to the marshy jungles of the Lower Euphrates, for a long time searched in vain. At last a boor told them that there were no herds in the vicinity; whereupon an ox bellowed from the thicket, 'The liar! here we all are.' They entered the jungle and found a great herd, which was driven off, and lasted the army many days.

[2] On the right, we are told that towards the N.E. the country was flooded as far as Walaja. For the 'Trench of Sapor,' dug three centuries before, see *Life of Mahomet*, vol. i. p. clxxi., where also will be found an account of the beautiful palace of Khawarnac. One road led to the palace, another to the desert, and a third from the bridge took a direction south into Arabia.

The chronology is somewhat obscure. Sád is said to have encamped only two months at Câdesîya before the battle; but either he must have been much longer in that vicinity, or have spent some considerable time previously at Odzeib or Shirâf, or else upon the march thither—which last is not unlikely, as they travelled in heavy order, like emigrants with their families. Sád set out from Medina in spring (it was March when on the way he received tidings of Mothanna's death), and the great battle was not fought till November; so that three-quarters of a year have to be accounted for. According to some

general's report, enjoined upon him vigilance and patience. But first, he said, Yezdegird must be summoned to embrace the Faith at the peril of his kingdom. With this commission, a party of twenty warriors, chosen for their commanding mien, crossed the plain and presented themselves at the gates of Medâin.[1] As they were led to the royal presence, the rabble crowded around, and jeered at the rough habit of the Arabs, clad in striped Yemen stuff, and armed with the rude weapons of the desert, all contrasting strangely with the courtly splendour of the regal city. 'Look!' they cried mocking, 'look at the woman's distaff,' meaning the Bedouin bow slung over the shoulder, little thinking of the havoc it was soon to make in their crowded ranks. As the Chiefs entered the precincts of the palace, the prancing and champing of the beautiful steeds, and the wild bearing of the stalwart riders, struck awe into the heart of the king and his effeminate nobles. Yezdegird demanded, through an interpreter, wherefore, thus unprovoked, they had dared to invade his kingdom. One after another the Arabian spokesmen told him of the Prophet who had wrought a mighty change in their land, and they explained to him the nature of Islam, its blessings and its obligations. 'Embrace the Faith,' they said, 'and thou shalt be even as one of us; or, if thou wilt, pay tribute, and come under our protection; which things if thou shalt refuse, the days of thy kingdom are numbered.' The king replied contemptuously: 'Ye are naught, ye are naught! hungry adventurers from a naked land; come, I will give you a morsel, and ye shall depart full and content.' The Arabs replied in strong but modest words. 'Thou speakest truth. We are poor and hungry; but the Lord will enrich and satisfy us.

traditions, Rustem prolonged his march from Medâin to Câdesîya through a period of four months, which, however, may be an exaggeration.

[1] The names of fifteen are given as 'among' those sent, so there may have been as many as twenty or more. Of the number were the two Moghîras, Asháth, Amr ibn Máḍekerib, Nomân ibn Mocarrin, Otârid, Moánna, &c.

Thou hast chosen the sword; and between us shall the sword decide.' The king's wrath was kindled. 'If it were not,' he cried, 'that ye are ambassadors, ye should have been put to death, all of you. Bring hither a clod of earth, and let the mightiest among them bear it as a burden from out the city gates.' The Arabs embraced the happy augury. Asim forthwith seized the load, and binding it over his shoulders, mounted his charger and rode away. Rustem coming up at that moment, the king told him of the affront he had put upon the simple Arabs. 'Simple!' cried Rustem, 'it is thou that art simple;' and he sent in haste to get the burden back again: but Asim was already far away with his treasure. Hastening to Câdesîya, he cast the clod before his chief, and exclaimed, 'Rejoice, O Sâd! for, lo, the Lord hath given thee of the soil of Persia!'[1]

Rustem, with immense host, marches from Medâin,

Rustem could now no longer delay the campaign. Elephants, cavalry, and soldiers had been gathered from every quarter to swell the host. He set out at the head of an army 120,000 strong.[2] But he still delayed, marching slowly and unwillingly. The auguries, drawn from astrology and divination, all boded some great disaster. But he cherished the hope that the Arabs, pinched in their supplies, might, as in days of old, break up and disappear; or, at any rate, that, wearied with the suspense, they

[1] There is much embellishment and romance in the scene and in the speeches, which are given in great detail, and must be taken only for what they are worth. They have been spun by tradition, no doubt, around a kernel of fact. There must have been many Persians present, who would tell the tale in after days, as well as the members of the deputation itself. There is fair probability for at least so much of the narrative as I have given. Asim was brother of the warrior Cacâa.

[2] Jalenûs led the advanced column of 40,000; Rustem, the main body of 60,000; there were 20,000 in the rear-guard; and besides, 60,000 camp followers accompanied the army. The right wing was commanded by Hormuz, the left by Mehrân, son of Behrâm. Some traditions put the numbers at 200,000; but it is all guess-work. 15,000 of these (as with the Roman army) are called 'bound (meaning, apparently, tied together) for death,' and 60,000 free; the rest seemingly slaves and convicts. Abundance of tales are given of Rustem's desponding dreams and auguries.

might be drawn from their strong position across the river. After many weeks' delay upon the road, he passed over the Euphrates below Babylon, and encamped under the ruined pile of Birs Nimrud. Advancing on Hîra, he chided the people for siding with the Arabs; they replied with justice, that, deserted by their King, they had no resource left them but to bow before the invaders. At last, having whiled away four months from the time of starting, Rustem, passing Najaf, came within sight of the Moslem force, and pitched his camp on the opposite bank of the river.

and encamps opposite the Arabs. A.H. XIV. October, A.D. 635.

Moslem army restrained by Sád.

During this long period of inaction, the impatience of the Arabs was, not without difficulty, checked by the strong hand of Sád, to whom as Ameer, and lieutenant of the supreme Ameer, the Moslems were bound to yield implicit obedience. Excepting raids and reconnoitring expeditions nothing was attempted. Some of these, however, were sufficiently daring and exciting. On one occasion, Toleiha, the *quondam* prophet, entered by night the enemy's camp alone, and cutting the ropes of a tent, carried off three horses. Hotly pursued, he slew his pursuers one after another, excepting the last; who, seized by Toleiha single-handed, and carried off a prisoner, embraced Islam, and fought ever after faithfully by his captor's side.[1] As the enemy drew near, the Moslem host lay couched like the tiger in its lair, ready for the fatal spring.

Rustem obtains truce for three days.

The contending armies being now face to face, Rustem had no longer excuse for putting off the decisive day. On the morning after his arrival he rode along the river bank to reconnoitre; and, standing on an eminence by the bridge, sent for Zohra, who with the foremost column was guarding the passage. A colloquy ensued; and Sád consented that an embassy proceeding to the Persian camp, should there set forth his demands. Three envoys, one after another,

[1] These raids and expeditions are narrated at a length altogether incommensurate with their importance—excepting that everything connected with the impending battle is invested by tradition with unusual significance.

repaired to Rustem. All held the same language: *Islam*, *Tribute*, or the *Sword*. The Persian, now contemptuous in his abuse, now cowering under the fierce threats of the envoys, and scared (as we are to believe) by his dreams and auguries, at last demanded time to consider. Three days' grace, they replied, was the limit of delay which their Prophet allowed for choice; and that was given.[1]

Rustem throws a dam over the river,

When the term was over, Rustem (as was common in that day) sent to inquire whether he or they should cross the river for battle. Strongly pitched, his rear resting on the trench of Sapor, flanked by Codeis and by a morass, and with the river in front, Sád had no thought of moving; and he bade the Persian cross as best he might. Rustem advanced, but passage was denied. All night the Arabs watched the bridge. But Rustem had another scheme; he meant to cross the river by a dam. During the night his myrmidons cast fascines and earth into the channel, and the morning light discovered a causeway over which it was possible to pass.

and crosses.

As soon as it was day, Rustem, clad in helmet and double suit of mail, leaped gaily, as it would seem, upon his horse. 'By the morrow we shall have beaten them small,' he cried.[2] But apart with his familiars he confessed that celestial omens were against him. And, indeed, previous mishaps, and the brave bearing of the Arab chiefs, were sufficient—astrology apart—to inspire grave forebodings. Crossing the dam unopposed, he marshalled his great host on the western bank,

[1] The three envoys were Ribia, Hodzeifa, and Moghîra. The colloquies are much in the same style as those at the court of Medâin—long addresses, and rather tiresome. Rustem is represented at one time as inclining to Islam, and held back only by the taunts of his officers from embracing it; at another, threatening the Arabs with contemptuous denunciations. Much is drawn evidently from the imagination of the traditionists.

[2] 'If the Lord will,' added one of his followers. 'Whether He will or not,' said Rustem. Affecting to speak contemptuously of the Arabs, he said: 'It is going, I fear, to be a year of monkeys. The fox barks when the lion is dead;' meaning that in the time of Chosroes the Arabs would not have dared to invade Persia. Fresh dreams and omens of a portentous kind now multiplied upon him.

with the centre facing the fortress of Codeis. There were thirty war elephants in the field; eighteen were posted with the centre, and the remainder under Jalenûs and Firuzân with the wings.[1] A canopy covering a golden throne was pitched for Rustem by the river side; and, seated there, he watched the issue of the day. Messengers posted within earshot of one another the whole way from the battle-field to Medâin, shouted continually the latest news, and kept Yezdegird informed of all that passed.

Sád disabled by illness, marshals the army from the ramparts of Codeis.

As the Persians began to cross, the advanced guard of the Arabs fell back on Codeis, beneath which the main body was drawn up. On the rampart of the fortress, Sád, disabled by blains and boils, lay stretched upon a litter; from whence casting down his orders inscribed on scraps of paper, he guided thus the movements of the army. The troops, unused to see their leader, at such a moment, in a place of safety, murmured; and verses lampooning him were soon in the mouth of everyone. That he, the archer of renown, and the 'first to shed blood in Islam,' should be thus aspersed was insupportable, and Sâd accordingly had the ringleaders seized and imprisoned in the fortress. He then descended, and discovered to the troops the grievous malady which rendered it impossible for him even to sit upright, much less to mount his horse. They accepted his excuse; for no man could doubt his bravery; but still a certain feeling of discontent survived.[2] Resuming his recumbent posture, he

[1] There were, besides, the riding elephants of the court and nobles. These must all have been imported from India. The elephant does not appear to have been used by the Assyrians in war. It only appears in their mural representations as a rarity, and under peaceful associations.

The names of the other leaders were Dzul Hâjib (or Bahmân Jadoweih), Mehrân, Hormuzan, and Bendzowân.

[2] The squib did not die out (as we shall see below), but assumed a permanent form, as in this couplet:—

> We fought patiently until the Lord vouchsafed us victory,
> While Sád was safe within the walls of Cádesiya;
> And we returned to our homes, finding many a widow there;
> But among the women of Sád there was not any widow found.

harangued the army from the battlements, and then he sent his chief captains, with the orators and poets that accompanied his force, along the ranks to rouse their martial spirit.

Sura *Jehâd* recited before the army.

At the head of every column, as a preparation for the battle, was recited the Sura Jehâd, with the stirring story of the thousand angels that fought on the Prophet's side at Bedr, and such hortatory texts as these:—'*Stir up the Faithful unto battle. If there be twenty steadfast among you, they shall put to flight two hundred of the Unbelievers, and a hundred shall put to flight a thousand. Victory cometh from the Lord alone; He is mighty and wise. I will cast terror into the hearts of the Infidels. Strike off their heads, and their fingers' ends. Beware that ye turn not your back in battle. Verily he that turneth his back shall draw down upon him the wrath of God. His abode shall be Hell-fire; an evil journey thither.*'[1] The mention of the great day of 'DECISION' at Bedr, with the Divine command to fight, never failed to fire the souls of the Moslem host. And here we are told that upon the recital 'the heart of the people was refreshed, and their eyes lightened, and they felt the Tranquillity that followeth thereupon.'

BATTLE OF CÂDESÎYA. Ramadhân A.H. XIV. November, A.D. 635. I. Day, called *Armâth*.[2]

The word was then passed round. Till the midday prayer, no one should stir. The Ameer would give the first signal by proclaiming the Takbîr, *Great is the Lord!* and the whole host would then take up the shout from him. At the second and third Takbîr, they were to gird their weapons on, and make ready their horses for action. At the fourth, the

[1] Sura viii., entitled *Anfâl*, or 'The Spoils,' is called also 'Sura Jehâd.' It is a long chapter, of seventy-eight verses. On ordinary occasions only suitable portions were recited. Here, apparently, the entire Sura was read. Two other Suras—*Victory* (xlviii.) and *She who is tried* (lx.)—are also used before battle, as containing warlike passages; and the practice is kept up in Moslem campaigns to the present day.

[2] The battle lasted three days, and each day, it will be observed, had a different name. The first, *Armâth*; the second, *Aghwâth* (alluding, as some think, to the *succour* brought that day by the Syrian contingent); the third,

ranks were to rush in one body forward with the battle-cry, *Our help is from the Lord!* The order was deranged by the enemy, who, hearing the shouts, advanced upon the third Takbîr; whereupon several warriors from the Moslem front stepped forward, and challenging the enemy to single combat, did prodigies of valour. We are reminded of the similar feats at Bedr; only the spoil, stripped from the fallen champions here, was rich beyond comparison. Thus, Amr ibn Mádekerib carried off triumphantly the bracelets and jewelled girdle of a princely victim. Ghâlib, of the Beni Asad, advanced, shouting gaily—

> The maid, with hanging tresses,
> Milk-white breast and fingers tapering,
> Knows that when the battle waxeth hot,
> I am he that lays the warriors low.

Singing thus, he closed with Hormuz, 'a prince of the Gate,' and, spoiling him of his armour, bore him, along with his diadem, a captive to Sád. Asim, leader of the Beni Temîm, singing a like war-song, pursued his adversary right into the enemy's ranks; there he seized a mule-driver, and carried him off with his laden beast to the Moslem lines; it was the king's baker with a load of his choicest viands. More remarkable still is the story of Abu Mihjan the Thâckifite. He was a ringleader in the detraction of Sád, and his offence was aggravated by drunkenness. Bound as a prisoner in the fort, under charge of Selma, he was seized by an irrepressible ardour to join the battle. At his earnest entreaty, and under pledge of an early return, she set him free, and mounted him on her husband's white mare. An unknown figure, he dashed in circuits, now into and now around the enemy's host, performing marvels of bravery.

Ghimâs; the final night, *Harîr* (noise or clangour). The last is the only name which clearly has a meaning, as we shall see. The others may have been taken from names of places. See *C. de Perceval*, vol. iii. p. 484. Gibbon (ch. li.), ignoring the first day, translates the other three as signifying Succour, Concussion, and Barking.

Some thought it might be the chief of the Syrian contingent, expected that day. Others opined that it was Al Khizr, precursor of the angelic band. But Sád said, 'If it were not that Abu Mihjan is safe in durance under Selma's care, I would take an oath that it were he, and the mare my own.' According to promise, the hero, satisfied with his exploits, returned to Selma, who reimposed his fetters as before, securing, shortly after, his release.[1] But now the elephants bore down upon the Bedouin lines. The brunt of the onset fell upon the Beni Bajîla. The horrid sight of huge beasts swaying to and fro,—'the *howdas*, manned with warriors and banners, like unto moving castles,'—affrighted the Arab horses, and they broke away in terror. At Sád's command the Beni Asad diverted the attack upon themselves; but in the heroic act they left four hundred dead upon the field. Then the elephants attacked the wings, spreading consternation all around; and the enemy, profiting by the confusion, pressed forward. The position was now critical; and Sád, as a last resource, bade Asim to rid them from the danger at whatever cost. At once that gallant chief chose from the Beni Temîm a band of archers and of agile skirmishers, who, drawing near, picked off the riders one by one, and boldly cut the girths. The howdas fell, and the great beasts, with none to guide them, fled. Thus relieved, the Arabs regained their ground. But the shades of darkness were falling, and both armies retired for the night.

Sád upbraided by his wife.

The Moslem force was downcast. The uncertain issue added point to the invectives of Sád's accusers, and, what was

[1] Abu Mihjan confessed to Selma that in his cups he had been singing these verses:—

Bury me when I die by the roots of the vine;
The moisture thereof will distil into my bones;
Bury me not in the open plain, for then I much fear
That no more again shall I taste the flavour of the grape.

But he swore to her that he would not again indulge in drinking, nor in abuse of the Ameer. And Selma, explaining this to Sád, obtained his release, so that he joined his comrades on the last great day of battle.

still harder for him to bear, the reproaches of Selma. As during the day, seated by her lord, they watched the lines swaying in deadly conflict to and fro, she exclaimed bitterly, 'O for an hour of Mothanna! Alas, alas, there is no Mothanna to-day!' Stung by the taunt, Sád struck her on the face, and pointing to Asim and his band, said, 'What of Mothanna? Is he to be compared with these?' 'Jealousy and cowardice!' cried the high-spirited dame, faithful to her first husband's memory. 'Not so, by any means,' said Sád somewhat softened; 'I swear that no man will this day excuse me if thou dost not, who seest in what plight I lie.' The people sided with the lady; but (tradition adds) Sád was no coward, and he lived the contumely down.

II. Day, called *Aghwâth.*

The morning was occupied with the wounded and the dead; and the day was advanced before fighting was resumed. Just then the first column of the Syrian contingent came in view. It was led by Cacâa, a host in himself, who hurried forward with a thousand men, leaving Hâshim to bring up the main body of five thousand more, the following day. By a skilful disposition Cacâa magnified his force, in the eyes both of friend and foe. He arranged his men in bands of a hundred, each following at a little distance behind the other. Advancing, he saluted Sád and his comrades, and bade them joy of the coming help. Then calling upon the rest to follow, he at once rode forth to defy the enemy. Dzul Hâjib, the hero of *the Bridge*, accepted the challenge. Cacâa recognised his foe; and crying out, 'Now will I avenge Abu Obeid and those that perished at the Bridge,' rushed on his man and cut him lifeless to the ground. As each of Cacâa's squadrons came up, it charged with all the appearance of a fresh and independent column across the plain in sight of both armies, shouting the Takbîr, which was answered by the same ringing cheer, *Allah Akbar*, from the Moslem line. The spirits of the Arabs rose, and they forgot the disasters of yesterday. Equally the heart of the Persians sank. These

saw their heroes slain, one after another, at the hands of Cacâa and his fellows.[1] They had no elephants this day, for their gear was not yet repaired. Pressed on all sides, their horse gave way, and Rustem was only saved by a desperate rally. The Persian infantry, however, stood their ground, and the day closed with the issue still trembling in the balance. The fighting was severe and the carnage great. Two thousand Moslems lay dead or wounded on the field, and ten thousand Persians. All night through the Arabs kept shouting the names and lineage of their several tribes. There was shouting, too, in the Persian camp. And so, encouraging themselves, each side awaited the final struggle.[2]

III. Day, called *Ghimâs.*

Burial of the dead.

On the third morning, the army was again engaged in the mournful task of removing their fallen comrades from the field. The space of a mile between the two lines was strewn with them. The wounded were made over to the women to nurse, if perchance they might survive—or rather, in the language of Islam—'until the Lord should decide whether to grant, or to withhold from them, the crown of martyrdom.' The dead were borne to a valley in the rear towards Odzeib, where the women and children hastily dug graves for them in the sandy soil. The wounded, too, were carried to the rear. For the suffering sick it was a weary passage under the burning sun. A solitary palm-tree stood on the way, and under its welcome shade they were laid for a moment as they passed by. Its memory is consecrated in such plaintive verse as this:

Hail to the grateful palm that waves between Câdesîya and Odzeib.
By thy side are the wild sprigs of camomile and hyssop.
May dew and shower water thy leaves beyond all others.
Let there never want a palm-tree in thy scorching plain!

[1] Cacâa is said to have dressed up a troop of camels with trappings, &c., resembling those of elephants, and so endeavoured to affright the Persian cavalry. But it reads like a story.

[2] Sâd felt satisfied and assured, so long as this shouting of genealogies

Fighting resumed. Arrival of Syrian troops.

A day and a night of unceasing conflict were still before the combatants. The spirit of the Persians, whose dead lay unburied on the field, flagged at the disasters of the preceding day. But much was looked for from the elephants, which, now refitted, appeared anew upon the field, each protected by a company of horse and foot. The battle was about to open, when suddenly Hâshim came up with the main body of the Syrian troops. Sweeping across the plain, he charged right into the enemy, pierced their ranks, and having reached the river bank, turned and rode triumphantly back, amidst shouts of welcome. The fighting was again severe, and the day balanced by alternate victory and repulse. Yezdegird, alive to the crisis, sent his own bodyguard into the field. The elephants were the terror of the Arabs, and again threatened to paralyse their efforts. In this emergency, Sád had recourse to Cacâa, who was achieving marvels, and had already slain thirty Persians in single combat; so that the annalists gratefully acknowledge, 'if it had not been for what the Lord put it into the heart of Cacâa to do, we had surely in that great battle been discomfited.'[1] Sád learned from some Persian refugees that the eye and trunk were the only vulnerable parts of the elephant: 'Aim at these,' he said, 'and we shall be rid of this calamity.' So Cacâa took his brother Asim, and a band of followers as a forlorn hope, and issued on the perilous

The elephants put to flight.

went on among his men, that all was right; and desired that his sleep should not be disturbed during the night unless it ceased. What kind of shouting the Persians' was is not stated.

[1] So tradition says; but it seems a piece of extravagance that thirty Persians should come forward, one after another, to be thus cut down.

Cacâa is the great hero of Câdesîya whom tradition delights to honour. He was fearful lest Hâshim should not arrive in time. So, to keep up the spirits of the Moslems, he repeated the tactics of the previous day. During the night he led his thousand men back a little way on the Syrian road, and in the morning appeared as before, company after company, as if they had been fresh reinforcements. The last had just come in, when Hâshim himself appeared in sight with his 5,000. But there is a tendency to fiction throughout as respects Cacâa.

undertaking. There were two great elephants, the leaders of the herd. Dismounting, they boldly advanced towards these, and into the eye of one, the 'great White elephant,' Cacâa succeeded in thrusting his lance. Smarting at the pain, it shook fearfully its head, threw the mahout, and swaying its trunk with great force, hurled Cacâa to a distance. The other fared still worse, for they pierced both its eyes, and slashed its trunk. Uttering a shrill scream of agony, blinded and maddened, it darted forward on the Arab ranks. Shouts and lances drove it back upon the Persians. And so they kept it rushing wildly to and fro between the armies. At last, followed by the other elephants, it charged right into the Persian line; and so the whole herd of huge animals,—their trunks raised aloft, trumpeting as they rushed by, and trampling all before them,—plunged into the river and disappeared on the farther shore. For the moment the din of war was hushed as both armies gazed transfixed at the portentous spectacle. But soon the battle was resumed, and they fought on till evening, when darkness again closed on the combatants with the issue still in doubt.

The Night of Clangour.

The third night brought rest to neither side. It was a struggle for life. At first there was a pause, as the light faded away; and Sád, fearing lest the vast host should overlap his rear, sent Amr and Toleiha with parties to watch the lower fords. There had as yet been hardly time for even momentary repose when, early in the night, it occurred to some of the Arab leaders to call out their tribes with the view of harassing the enemy. The movement, made at the first without Sád's cognisance, drew on a general engagement in the dark. The screams of the combatants and din of arms made *The Night of Clangour*, as it is called, without parallel in the annals of Islam. It could only be compared to 'the clang of a blacksmith's forge.' Sád betook himself to prayer, for no sure tidings reached him all night through.[1] Morning

[1] The first thing, we are told, that gave him assurance was the sound of

broke on the two hosts, weary but still engaged in equal combat. Then arose Cacâa and said that one more vigorous charge would surely bring the decisive turn, 'for victory ever followeth him that persevereth to the end.' For four-and-twenty hours the troops had maintained the struggle without closing an eye. Yet now the Moslems issued with freshness and alacrity to a new attack. The Persian wings began to waver. Then a fierce onslaught on their centre shook the host: it opened and uncovered the bank on which was pitched the throne of Rustem. A tempestuous wind arose; and the canopy, no longer guârded, was blown into the river. The wretched prince had barely time, before his enemies were upon him, to fly and crouch beneath a mule laden with treasure. The chance blow of a passer-by brought down the pack and crushed the prince's back. He crawled to the bank and cast himself into the river; but not before he was recognised by a soldier, who drew him out and slew him, and then, mounting his throne, loudly proclaimed his end.[1]

The Persians discomfited and Rustem slain.

Destruction of the Persian host.

No sooner was their leader slain, than the rout and slaughter of the Persian host began. Firuzân and Hormuzân succeeded in passing their columns over the dam, and making good their flight before their pursuers could cross the bridge. Jalenûs, standing by the mound, exhorted his men to follow; but the dam (perhaps to secure

the Arabs vaingloriously reciting their genealogies, as they had done the night before. Then, towards morning, Cacâa was heard shouting—

> We have slain a whole host, and more,
> Singly, and in fours and fives,
> (We were like black serpents in the manes of lions)
> Until, as they fell, I called out lustily,
> *The Lord is my Lord!* whiles I had to keep my guard all round.

Whereupon Sâd knew that the attack was going on favourably.

[1] Another account is that, on the approach of the Moslems, Rustem shot an arrow, which transfixed the foot of Hilâl (the fortunate captor) to his stirrup; whereupon Hilâl rushed forward and despatched him. Gibbon's version is very different from either.

retreat) had been already cut, and was soon swept away, and with it a multitude into the stream.[1] To the right and to the left, up the river bank and down, the Mussulmans chased the fugitives relentlessly. Jalenûs, vainly endeavouring to rally his men, was slain, and his body rifled of its jewelled spoil. The plain, far and wide, was strewn with dead bodies. The fugitive multitude, hunted even into the fens and marshes, were everywhere put mercilessly to the sword. But the army was too exhausted to carry the pursuit to any great distance beyond the river.

Moslem loss.

The Mussulman loss far exceeded that of any previous engagement. In the final conflict 6,000 fell, besides 2,500 in the two days before. No sooner was the battle ended, than the women and children, carrying pitchers of water, and armed with clubs, on a double mission of mercy and of vengeance, spread themselves over the field. Every fallen Mussulman, still warm and breathing, they gently raised and wetted his lips with water. But towards the wounded Persians they knew no mercy; for them they had another errand; raising their clubs they gave to them the *coup de grâce*. Thus had Islam extinguished the sentiment of pity, and, against nature, implanted in the breasts of the gentler sex, and even of little children, the spirit of fierce and cold-blooded cruelty.[2]

Wounded Persians despatched by women and children.

[1] The Hindia (which answers to the Atick or Bâdacla) is described by Geary as flowing swiftly, sixty yards broad, and in the full season eight or nine feet deep, with banks from ten to twenty feet in height.

[2] This is on the authority of one present:—'We followed our husbands,' she relates, 'and no sooner was the Persian army routed than we (the women) tucked up our garments, seized clubs in our hands, and issued forth to the field of battle, which was strewn with the dead. Every Moslem still alive we raised up, and gave drink to; and every wounded heathen we despatched. And the children followed us, and were helpers with us in this service.' (*Tabari*, iii. p. 73.)

A characteristic incident is mentioned. Among the slain was the Muedzzin of the army. There was a contention as to who should succeed to this post of honour. It came near to blows and bloodshed, when Sûd interposed, and settled the matter by his authority.

The vast booty.

Like the loss of life, so also the spoil for the survivors was great beyond all parallel, both in its amount and costliness. Each soldier had six thousand dirhems, besides special gifts for the veterans and for such as had shown extraordinary valour. The jewels stripped from Rustem's body were worth 70,000 pieces, although the tiara, most costly portion of his dress, had been washed away. The great banner of the empire was captured on the field. It was made of panthers' skins, but so richly garnished with gems as to be valued at 100,000 pieces.[1] The prize taken by Zohra from the person of Jalenûs was so costly, that Sâd, doubting whether it might not be altogether too great for one person, applied to Omar for advice. The Caliph chided him in reply. 'Dost thou grudge the spoil to such a one as Zohra,' he wrote, 'after all that he hath wrought, and in view of all the fighting yet to come? Thou wilt break his heart thus. Give him the whole, and over and above add a special gift of 500 pieces.' Thus did the needy Arabs revel in the treasures of the East, the costliness of which almost exceeded their power to comprehend.

Decisive character of the victory.

For the enemy, the defeat was crushing, and decisive of the nation's fate. It was little more than thirty months since Khâlid had set foot upon Irâc, and already that empire, which fifteen years before had humbled the Roman arms, had ravaged Syria, and encamped triumphantly on the Bosphorus, was crumbling under the blows of an enemy whose strength never exceeded thirty or forty thousand Arabs rudely armed. The battle of Câdesîya reveals the secret. On one side there was but a lukewarm, servile following; on the other, an indomitable spirit that nerved every heart and arm, and

[1] The captor received 30,000. Gibbon, resting on the authority of D'Herbelot, tells us:—'The standard of the monarchy was overthrown and captured on the field—a leathern apron of a blacksmith who, in ancient times, had arisen, the deliverer of Persia; but this badge of heroic poverty was disguised and almost concealed by a profusion of precious gems.' Our authorities simply describe it as made of panthers' skins, richly jewelled.

after long weary hours of fighting enabled the Moslems to deliver the final and decisive charge. The result was, that the vast host, on which the last efforts of the empire had been spent, was totally discomfited; and, although broken columns escaped across the river, the military power of the empire never again gathered itself into formidable shape. The country far and wide was terror-struck. An important though indirect effect was that the Bedouin tribes on the Euphrates hesitated no longer. Many of them, though Christian, had fought on the Moslem side. Some of these now came to Sád and said: 'The tribes which at the first embraced Islam were wiser than we. Now that Rustem hath been slain, all will accept the new belief.' So there came over many tribes in a body and made profession of the faith.

Tidings how received by Omar.

The battle had been so long impending, and the preparations of the empire on so grand a scale, that the issue was watched all over the country, 'from Odzeib away south to Aden, and from Obolla across to Jerusalem,' as that which would decide the fate of Islam.[1] The Caliph used to issue forth alone from the gates of Medîna early in the morning, if perchance he might meet some messenger from the field of battle. At last a courier arrived outside the city, who to Omar's question replied shortly, 'The Lord hath discomfited the Persian host.' Unrecognised, Omar followed the camel-rider on foot, and gleaned from him the outline of the great battle. Entering Medîna, the people crowded round the Caliph, and, saluting, wished him joy of the triumph. The courier, abashed, cried out, 'O Commander of the Faithful, why didst thou not tell me?' 'It is well, my brother,' was the Caliph's simple answer. Such was the unpretending mien of one who at that moment was greater than either the Kaiser or the Chosroes.

[1] The vast import of the battle is signified by the tradition that the tidings of the victory were carried by the Genii to distant parts, long before it was possible for any human messenger to reach.

CHAPTER XVII.

EVENTS FOLLOWING THE BATTLE OF CADESIYA—CAPTURE OF MEDAIN.

A.H. XV., XVI. A.D. 636–7.

Sád re-occupies Hîra, end of A.H. XIV. January, A.D. 636.

AFTER his victory, Sád, by desire of the Caliph, paused for a little on the field of Câdesîya, and allowed the weary troops to rest. Fragments of the great Persian host escaped, broken and dispersed, in the direction of the ruins of Babylon, and rallied there, on the right bank of the Euphrates. After two months' repose, Sád, now recovered from his sickness, advanced to attack them. One or two short marches brought him to Hîra. It was the third time the unfortunate city had been taken and retaken. The punishment for this its last helpless defection from the Moslem cause, was the doubling of its tribute. Soon supplanted by Kûfa, at a few miles' distance, the once royal city speedily dwindled into a common village. But the neighbouring palace of Khawarnac, the beautiful residence of the Lakhmite princes, was left standing on the lake of Najaf, and was sometimes visited, as a country seat, by the Caliphs in after days.

The Persians driven across the plain to Medâin, and the Sawâd re-occupied.

As the Moslems advanced, the Persian troops made a stand, first at Birs Nimrûd,[1] and then, recrossing the Euphrates, under the great mound of Babylon. Driven from thence with loss, they fell back upon the Tigris. Sád then pitched a standing camp at Babylon, and, himself remaining

[1] Written *Burs*. There is a town Bûrsa on the Euphrates, four leagues below Babylon; but I take it that the ruin (*Tower of Babel*) is meant, which lay in the way.

there, sent forward his lieutenants, Hâshim and Zohra. These, in a series of minor but decisive engagements, cleared the plain of Dura, here about fifty miles broad, from the Euphrates to the Tigris.[1] The territorial chiefs from all sides came in, tendering their allegiance, some as converts, some as tributaries; and the Arabs again became undisputed masters of the whole *Sawâd*, with the channels and canals intersecting it. Several months thus passed; and at last, in the summer of A.D. 636, Sád found himself able, now with the full consent of Omar, to make an advance upon Medâin.[2] A.H. XV. A.D. 636.

The queen-mother is discomfited.

This royal city of Persia was built, as we have seen, on both banks of the Tigris, at a sharp and double bend of the river, fifteen miles below the modern Baghdad. Seleucia, on the right bank, was the original seat of the Alexandrian conquerors. On the opposite shore had grown up Ctesiphon, the winter residence of the Persian monarchs. The combined city had now for ages superseded Babylon as the capital of Chaldæa. Though repeatedly taken by the Romans, it was now great and prosperous, but helplessly torn by intrigue and enervated by luxury. The main quarter, with its royal palaces, was on the eastern side, where the noble arch, the *Tâk i Kesra*, still arrests the traveller's eye as he floats down the Tigris.[3] On the nearer side was the suburb, Bahar Sair;[4] and towards it, as immediately acces-

[1] In these engagements, Sûra, Kûtha, and Sabât, towns situated on or near the Tigris, were either taken, or submitted themselves to the Moslem arms. While encamped at Babylon, Sád made a pilgrimage to the shrine (*Majlis*) of Abraham.

[2] Medâin signifies 'Cities.' It is said to have comprised a cluster of seven towns, but it is ordinarily taken to designate the twin cities of Seleucia and Ctesiphon. The double bend of the Tigris, in the form of the upper part of the letter S (with the convex side to the west), incloses a considerable peninsula on the eastern bank, and on this stands the Tâk i Kesra.

[3] Geary, in the account of his recent journey, says it is fast falling into decay; but 'the arch unequalled in the world' is still nearly entire. Built of brick, it has a façade 450 long and 160 deep, and the niches and cornices and mouldings still remain. The vaulted arch is nearly 100 feet high, with a span of 80 feet.

[4] It is also called Nahr Shîr, and is described as beyond (i.e. to the east of)

sible to attack, Sád now directed his march. Burân, the queen-mother, animated by the ancient spirit of the Sassanides, and swearing with a great oath that so long as the dynasty survived, the empire was invincible, herself took the field, with an army commanded by a veteran general, 'the lion of Chosroes.' She was utterly discomfited, and her champion slain by the hand of Hâshim. When he came to announce the victory, his cousin Sád kissed Hâshim's forehead, in token of approval and delight; and Hâshim kissed the feet of Sád.

Sád besieges the western suburb of Medâin. Summer, A.H. XV. A.D. 636.

Sád then marched forward; and, in reference to the vainglorious boast of the vanquished princess, he publicly recited this passage from the Corân:—

> Did ye not swear aforetime that ye would never pass away? Yet ye inhabited the dwellings of a people that dealt unjustly by their own souls; and ye saw how We dealt with them; for We made them a warning and example unto you.[1]

In this spirit, they came upon the bend of the river; and lo! the famous Iwân, or palace, with its great hall of white marble, stood close before them on the opposite shore. 'Good heavens!' exclaimed Sád, dazzled at the sight; '*Allah akbar!* What is this but the White Palace of Chosroes! Now hath the Lord fulfilled the promise which He made unto His Prophet.' And each company shouted, *Allah akbar!* 'Great is the Lord!' as it came up and gazed, wondering, at the great white building, almost within their grasp. But the city was too strong to storm, and Sád sat down before it. Catapults and testudos were brought up, but they made no impression on the massive ramparts of sunburnt brick. The besieged issued forth in frequent sallies; and the siege is mentioned as the last occasion on

Sabât. In the earlier campaigns, this name of *Nahr Sîr* frequently occurs, as the point at which the pursuit of the victorious columns was stopped by the Persian outposts.

[1] Sura xiv. v. 44.

which the warriors of Persia adventured themselves in single combat with the Arabs. The investment was so strict that the inhabitants were reduced to great straits. The army lay for several months before the city.[1] But it was not inactive in other directions; for bands were despatched throughout Lower Mesopotamia, wherever the great landholders failed to tender their submission. These ravaged the country between the two rivers, and brought in multitudes of prisoners; but, by Omar's command, they were dismissed peaceably to their homes.[2] Thus, all Mesopotamia, from Tekrît downwards, and from the Tigris westward to the Syrian desert, was brought entirely and conclusively under the sway of Islam.

Persians evacuate western suburb. Dzul Hijj, A.H. XV. January, A.D. 637.

The siege at last pressed so heavily on the western quarter, that the king sent a messenger, proposing terms. He would give up Mesopotamia and all beyond the Tigris, if they would leave him undisturbed on the eastern side. The offer was met by an indignant refusal.[3] Not long after,

[1] Among the single combats, a singular one is mentioned, in which Zohra challenged Shahryâr, a mighty champion. They closed, and each slew the other. But the story, though told with some detail, is uncertain; for, according to other accounts, Zohra was killed many years after by a fanatic (Khârijite) in the time of Hajjâj.

The Arabs had twenty catapults—an instrument of war not unknown in Arabia; see the siege of Tâyif (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 433). In Mesopotamia, now at Sád's command, there were ample materials for their construction. The ramparts must have been of great thickness; for, composed of sun-dried bricks, their outline can be still distinctly traced on either bank. Of buildings, however, there are, besides the *Tâk i Kesra*, no other remains of any kind whatever, the materials having all been carried off to build the city of Baghdad, 16 miles above it. But coins and coffins abound.

In the siege we are told that the people, reduced to the utmost distress, were driven to feed on cats and dogs. But, with the whole river front open to them by boat, and the other half of the city with plentiful supplies safe on the opposite bank, it is difficult to understand how this could have been.

[2] As many as 100,000 are said to have been thus captured and released.

[3] A touch of the marvellous affects the story of the capture of Modâin at several points. Sád's reply was communicated orally by Abu Mocarrin—'who spake to the king in words given to him at the moment by the Lord, but which he himself understood not, neither did those about him.' The fact was—as they were afterwards told by the single Persian left in the western suburb—that Abu Mocarrin had delivered (without knowing it) in the Persian

observing the walls no longer manned, an advance was ordered. They entered unopposed; the enemy had crossed in boats, and entirely evacuated the western bank. Not a soul was to be seen. Sád, however, was unable to follow up the success by storming the further capital; for the ferry-boats were all withdrawn to a distance beyond his reach. So the army, for some weeks, was forced to rest; and, occupying the deserted mansions of the western suburb, enjoyed a foretaste of Persian luxury.

CAPTURE OF MEDÂIN. Safar, A.H. XVI. March, A.D. 637.

When Medâin was first threatened, Yezdegird despatched his family, with some of the regalia and treasure, to Holwân, a fortified town in the hilly country to the north: and now, leaving Mihrân in command, he contemplated flight himself in the same direction. The heart of Persia had sunk hopelessly; for otherwise, the deep and rapid Tigris formed an ample defence against sudden assault. Indeed, the Arabs themselves were, for some considerable time, of this opinion; they were occupied, we are told, for two months, in the search for boats, which had all been removed from the western bank. Unexpectedly, a Persian deserter apprised Sád of a place where the river could be swum or forded. But the stream, always swift, was then upon the rise, and they feared lest the horses should be carried down by the turbid flood. Just then, news came in that Yezdegird was arranging to flee to the mountains on the third day with the rest of his treasure. Sád at once resolved upon the enterprise. Gathering his force together, he thus addressed them:—'We are now at the mercy of the enemy, who, having the river at command, is able to attack us unawares. The position is intolerable. Now, the Lord hath shown unto one amongst us a vision of the Faithful

tongue this mysterious answer: 'The Moslems will never make peace with thee, till they have eaten the honey of Afrîdûn, along with the citrons of Kûtha.' 'Alas!' exclaimed the king, 'what was this but an angelic message spoken through the lips of the messenger? Even the angels have turned against us!' And so, followed by his people, he fled across the river.

upon their horses, crossing the stream triumphantly. Arise, and let us stem the flood!' The desperate venture, supported by Salmân the Persian, was carried by acclamation.[1] Six hundred picked cavalry were forthwith drawn up in bands of sixty. The foremost rank plunged in, and bravely battled with the rapid flood. Down and across, they neared the other shore, as a Persian picket dashed into the water, and vainly endeavoured to beat them back. 'Raise your lances,' shouted the leader Asim, 'and bear right into their eyes.' So they drove them back, and safely reached dry land. Sád no sooner saw them land safe on shore, than he called on the rest to follow; and thus, with the cry—'Allah! Triumph to thy people—Destruction to thine enemies!'—troop after troop leaped into the river. So thick and close-arrayed were they, horses and mares together,[2] that the water was hidden from view; and, treading as it had been the solid ground, without a single loss, all gained the farther side.[3] The Persians, taken by surprise, fled panic-stricken.

[1] Salmân, 'the Persian,' was a convert of some standing. It was he who suggested to Mahomet the device of digging a trench to defend Medina against the siege which the Coreish laid to it, A.H. 5. (*Life of Mahomet*, chap. xvii.) A Christian, native of Ispahan (according to others, of Ram Hormuz), he had been taken captive in some Bedouin raid, and sold as a slave at Medina, where he obtained his freedom on professing Islam. We do not hear much more of him after this. He died at Medâin.

[2] This was done that the horses might the more readily follow one another.

[3] The gallant feat was repeated by Timoor, when he took Baghdad, A.D. 1392; his army, swimming across the river, 'thereby impressed the inhabitants with an opinion that they were invincible.' (Chesney, vol. i. p. 32.) The Tigris is more rapid, and has higher and steeper banks, than the Euphrates. It is 200 yards wide, and flows at over four miles an hour. The depth is considerable, and no fords are spoken of by travellers. According to Rich, it is low in winter, begins to rise in March from the melting of the snow on the hills, and reaches its height in May. In flood, he says, the current is over seven miles an hour. At the period of the passage, the stream must have been on the rise. Tradition says it was in full flood.

Moslem annalists may be excused for surrounding the heroic passage with many marvellous associations. For example, not only was there no loss of life, but not even of the most trifling article. A drinking jug was carried away by the current, but even that was recovered. The water reached the

The difficulty of the passage afforded them time but barely to escape with their families, and with such light stuff as they could hastily carry with them. The few inhabitants remaining, submitted themselves as tributaries. The Moslems, already in undisturbed possession, pursued the fugitives; but, meeting with no opposition, soon hastened back to share the royal spoil. They wandered over the gorgeous pavilions of a court into which for ages the East had poured its treasures, and they revelled in beautiful gardens, decked with flowers and laden with every kind of fruit. The conqueror established himself in the palace of the Chosroes. But first he was minded to render thanks in a Service of Praise. One of the princely buildings was turned for the moment into a house of prayer; and there, followed by as many as could be spared (for military precautions were yet observed), he ascribed the victory to the Lord of Hosts. The lesson was taken from the Sura *Smoke*, which speaks of Pharaoh and his host being overwhelmed in the Red Sea, and contains a passage thought to be peculiarly appropriate:—

> How many Gardens and Fountains did they leave behind,
> And Fields of Corn, and fair Dwelling-places,
> And pleasant things which they enjoyed!
> Even thus have We made another people to inherit the same.[1]

The spoil of Medáin.

The booty was rich beyond conception. Besides millions of treasure, there was countless store of silver and golden vessels, gorgeous vestments and garniture, and precious things of untold rarity and cost.[2] A lucky capture of sumpter mules disclosed an unexpected freight—the tiara, robes, and girdle of the king. The Arabs gazed in wonder at the crown and jewelled swords and all the splendour of

horses' manes, but they trod as it were on firm ground, &c. And it is added truly: 'In the whole history of Islam, there was no passage more wonderful than this crossing of the Tigris and the capture of the royal city.'

[1] Sura xliv. 25.

[2] The treasure alone was put at Three millions of dirhems. The property divided, including the Fifth, was estimated at Nine hundred millions.

the throne, and, among other marvels, at a camel of silver, large as life, with its rider of gold; and at a golden horse, having emeralds for teeth, its neck set with rubies, and the trappings of gold. The precious metals lost their conventional value, and gold was parted with for its weight in silver. Works of art in sandal-wood and amber were in the hands of everyone, with hoards of musk and the spicy products of the East. Camphor lay about in sacks, and was kneaded with the cakes as salt, till the pungent taste revealed the mistake.[1] The agents of the prize had a heavy task, for each man's share (and the army now numbered 60,000, all mounted) was twelve thousand pieces,[2] besides special largesses to the more distinguished warriors. The army could afford to be generous, and so they despatched to Medîna, over and above the royal Fifth, such rare and precious things as might stir the wonder of the simple citizens at home. To the Caliph they sent as a fitting gift the regalia of the empire, and the swords of the Chosroes and of Nómân, the prince of Hîra.[3] But the spectacle of the day was the banqueting carpet of the king, seventy cubits long and sixty broad. It was a garden, the ground of wrought gold and the walks of silver; green meadows were represented by emeralds, running rivulets by pearls; trees, flowers, and fruits by diamonds, rubies, and other precious stones. When the rest of the spoil had been distributed at the Great Mosque, and special gifts allotted to the more distinguished Companions, Omar took counsel what should be done with the royal carpet. The most advised to keep it as a trophy of Islam. But Aly, reflecting

[1] It was used, mingled with wax, for the candles of the wealthy. Gibbon has a note, *in loco*, on the more precious sorts.

[2] Say five or six thousand pounds each.

[3] Five swords were captured, notable not only for intrinsic value but historical interest. One had been the sword of the Kaiser of Rome; another had been taken from the Khacân of the Turks; and a third had been that of Dâhir, 'King of Hind.' The sword of Bahram was given to Cacâa; and Sád kept the Kaiser's for himself.

on the instability of earthly things, objected; and the Caliph, accepting his advice, had it cut in pieces and distributed with the other booty. The piece that fell to Aly's lot (and it was by no means the richest) fetched Twenty thousand dirhems.

Sád establishes his head-quarters at Medâin.

As Medâin offered every convenience for the seat of government, Sád established his head-quarters there. The palaces and mansions of the fugitive nobles were divided amongst his followers. The royal residence he occupied himself. The grand hall, its garnishing unchanged, was consecrated to Divine worship, and here, as a cathedral service, the Friday ritual was first celebrated in Irâc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BATTLE OF JALOLA—REDUCTION OF MESOPOTAMIA—KUFA AND BUSSORA FOUNDED.

A.H. XVI. A.D. 637.

Battle of Jalôla.

OMAR was satisfied, as well he might be, with the success achieved. His old spirit of caution revived, and, beyond rendering Mesopotamia and the border-lands within the Persian mountain range secure, he strictly forbade any forward movement. The summer of the sixteenth year of the Hegira was, therefore, passed by Sád in repose at Medâin. The king, with his broken troops, had fled into the mountains, and thence into the plains of Persia. And the people on either bank of the Tigris, seeing opposition vain, readily submitted themselves to the conqueror. In the autumn, however, the Persians, resolving again to try the chance of arms, flocked in great numbers to Yezdegird, and an army was formed at Holwân, a fortress on the stream of that name a hundred miles north of Medâin.

Persians advance. A.H. XVI. Autumn, A.D. 637.

From thence Mehrân, with part of the force, advanced to Jalôla, a stronghold on the mountain range half-way to Medâin. This place, capable of accommodating an army, and almost impregnable to such an enemy as the Moslems, was defended by a deep trench, and all outlets or accessible places guarded by *chevaux de frise* and spikes of iron. The movement was reported to the Caliph, and, with his sanction, Sád pushed forward Hâshim and Cacâa at the head of 12,000 men, including the flower of Mecca and Medîna; and they sat down in front of the citadel. The garrison, reinforced from time to time by the army at Holwân, made an obstinate

defence, and in frequent sallies attacked the besiegers with desperate bravery. Fresh troops had to be despatched from Medâin, and the siege was prolonged for eighty days. At length, on the occasion of a vigorous sally, a great storm darkened the air; and the Persian columns, losing their way, were pursued to the battlements by Cacâa, who seized one of the gates. Driven thus to desperation, they turned upon the Arabs, and a general engagement ensued, which 'was not surpassed by the *Night of Clangour*, excepting that it was shorter.' Beaten at every point, many of the enemy in the attempt to flee were caught by the iron spikes. They were pursued to some distance,[1] and the fields and roads were strewn (tradition tells us) with 100,000 corpses. Followed by the fragments of his army, Yezdegird fled to his northern capital, Rei, in the direction of the Caspian Sea.[2] Cacâa then advanced to Holwân, and defeating the troops which still held it, took possession of that stronghold, and left it garrisoned with Arab levies as the farthest Moslem outpost to the north.

The Persians routed, and Jalôla taken. Dzul Cáda, A.H. XVI. December, A.D. 637.

The spoil was again rich and plentiful, for it embraced much that had been hastily carried off as most precious from Medâin, and (what was of the highest value to the army) a vast number of fine Persian horses. A multitude of women also, many of whom must have been of gentle and princely birth, unable to effect escape into the plains beyond, fell a welcome prize into the conquerors' hands, and were distributed partly amongst the warriors on the spot and partly amongst the troops left at Medâin. The booty was valued at Thirty millions of dirhems, besides the horses, of which nine fell to the lot of every combatant. In charge of the Fifth, Sâd despatched to Medîna a youth named Ziâd, of doubtful parentage,[3] but of singular readiness and address. In pre-

The spoil.

[1] As far as Khaniekîn.

[2] The ruins of Rei are still visible within a few miles of Teheran.

[3] We shall hear more of Ziâd and of his parentage. His reputed father was Abu Sofian, who is said to have met his mother, a slave kept by another

sence of the Caliph, he harangued the citizens, and recounted in glowing words what had been won in Persia, rich lands and cities, endless spoil, with captive maids and princesses. Omar praised his speech, and declared that the troops of Sád had surpassed the traditions even of Arab bravery. But next morning, when about to distribute the booty, the rubies, emeralds, and vast store of precious things, he was seen to weep. 'What!' exclaimed Abd al Rahmân; 'a time of joy and thankfulness, and thou sheddest tears!' 'Yea,' replied the simple-minded Caliph; 'it is not for this I weep, but I foresee that the riches which the Lord hath bestowed upon us will become a spring of worldliness and envy, and in the end a calamity to my people.'

Ziâd deputed to Medina with the Fifth.

Ziâd was also the bearer of a petition from the leaders in Irâc, who chafed at the limit placed on their progress, and now asked for leave to pursue the fugitives into Khorasan and to the Caspian shore. But Omar, content with what had been already gained, forbade the enterprise. 'I desire,' he wrote in reply, 'that between Mesopotamia and the lands beyond, the hills shall form a barrier, so that the Persians shall not be able to get at us, nor we at them. The fruitful plains of Irâc suffice for all our wants; and I would rather the safety of my people than spoil and further conquest.' The conviction of a world-wide mission for Islam was yet in embryo; and the obligation to enforce its claims by a universal crusade had not yet dawned upon the nation. And, in good truth, a dominion embracing, as Islam now did, Syria, Chaldæa, and Arabia, might have satisfied the ambition even of an Assyrian or Babylonian monarch. The sound and equal mind of Omar, far from being unsteadied by the flush and giddiness of victory, cared first to consolidate and secure the prize he had already gained.

Omar will not sanction advance on Persia.

person, at Tayif. He was eventually acknowledged by Muâvia (son of Abu Sofian) as his brother, much to the scandal of the public. He was destined to play a prominent part in the history which follows.

Operations in Mesopotamia. A.H. XVI. Summer, A.D. 637.

The Persian frontier, for the time, was safe. A son of Hormuzân made an inroad from Masbazân, a fortress in the mountains, two days south of Holwân; but he was defeated and beheaded; and the place, strongly guarded, became one of an established line of frontier posts. There being no further attempt upon the peace of Medâin, the ambition of Sád and his generals, checked northwards by the Caliph's interdict, was for the present confined to the reduction of Mesopotamia. For this end, troops were sent up the verdant banks of the Tigris as far as Tekrît—a stronghold on the river, about a hundred miles above Medâin, held by a mixed garrison of Roman troops and Christian Bedouins. These bravely resisted the attack. But after forty days the Romans thought to evacuate the place, and, deserting their native allies, escape by their boats. The Bedouins, on the other hand, were tampered with, and went secretly over to Islam; so that, when a final assault was delivered, they seized the water-gate, and the Romans, taken on both sides, were put to the sword.[1] The newly converted allies then joined the force, and pressed enthusiastically forward to Mosul, which, hearing of the fall of Tekrît, at once surrendered, and became tributary. On the Euphrates, the Moslem arms had already met with equal success. The Bedouin tribes in Upper Mesopotamia having been urged by the Byzantine Court to make an attack on the invaders, who were threatening Hims, Sád was charged by Omar to effect a diversion from Irâc. The fortress of Hît on the Euphrates was accordingly besieged; but they found it too strong to carry by assault. Leaving, therefore, half of the force before the town, the commander marched rapidly up the

Hît and Kirkesia taken. A.H. XV. A.D. 636.

[1] The Bedouin part of the garrison was formed of the Beni Iyâdh, Tâghlib, Namr, &c. Tekrît was stormed by Timoor, after an obstinate defence, A.D. 1392. It is now 'a miserable village' of 600 houses. But the ruins around are extensive, and a castellated building overhangs the river at a height of 200 feet, with a fosse behind and a staircase leading down to the river, where the massacre no doubt took place.

river to Kirckesia,[1] at the junction of the Khabûr, and captured it by surprise. The garrison of Hît, when they heard of this, capitulated on condition of being allowed to retire. Thus, all the southern portion of Mesopotamia, from one river to the other, was reduced; the strongholds were garrisoned, and the Bedouins either converted to the faith or brought under subjection.

Delta of the *Shât al Arab* occupied. A.H. XIV. A.D. 635.

Towards the south also, the rule of Islam was established from the junction of the two rivers, along the Shât al Arab down to the shores of the Persian Gulf. This tract, with varying fortune, had been exposed to the raids of the Arabs ever since the first invasion of Mothanna. On one occasion, an expedition was worsted, and the leader killed. Omar saw that, to secure Irâc, it was needful to occupy in strength the head of the Gulf as far as the range of hills on its eastern side; about the period, therefore, of Sád's appointment he deputed Otba, a Companion of note, with a party under Arfaja from Bahrein, to capture the flourishing seaport of Obolla. The garrison was defeated, and the inhabitants, Indian merchants and others, escaped in their ships to the Gulf. The Persians then gathered in force on the eastern bank of the river, and many encounters took place before the Arabs succeeded in securing their position. In one of these, the women of the Moslem camp turned their veils into flags, and, marching in martial array to the battle-field, were mistaken for fresh reinforcements, and contributed thus at a critical moment to the victory. At last, in a great and decisive action, the enemy was routed, and the girdle of the leader, a Persian noble, sent as a trophy to the Caliph. The messenger who carried it, in answering the Caliph's questions, confessed that the Moslems were becoming luxurious in foreign parts:—'The love of this present life,' he said, 'hath increased upon them; gold and silver have dazzled their sight.' Concerned at the revela-

[1] Kirckesia or Circesium.

tion, the Caliph summoned to his presence Otba, who came, having left a Bedouin chief in charge of his government. The arrangement was highly distasteful to Omar: 'What!' he said, 'hast thou placed a Man of the desert over Men of the city and Companions of the Prophet? That can never be!' So Moghîra was substituted for the Bedouin; and Otba dying on the journey back, Moghîra became governor in his stead. Thus early arose the spirit of antagonism between the Bedouin chiefs and the men of Mecca and Medîna.

The Delta subdued. A.H. XIV. A.D. 635.

On the ruins of Obolla a small town arose of huts constructed of reeds, with a Mosque of the same material; and the settlement grew in size and importance by constant accessions from Arabia. But the climate was inhospitable to the new settlers. The tide here rises close to the level of the alluvial plain, which, irrigated with ease, is surpassingly fertile, and stretches far and wide a sea of verdure. The country abounds with groves of pomegranates, acacias, and shady trees; and a wide belt of the familiar date-palm fringing the river might reconcile the immigrant of the Hejâz to his new abode. But the moisture exhaled by a soil so near the water was ill-suited to the Arabian humour; pestilential vapours followed the periodical inundations, and gnats settled around them in intolerable swarms.[1] Three times the site was changed; at last the pleasant spot of BUSSORAH, near the river bank, and supplied with a stream of water running through it, was fixed upon; and there a flourishing city rapidly grew up. It was laid out about the same time, and after the same fashion, as its rival Kûfa. But, partly from a more congenial climate, partly from being more largely endowed with conquered lands, the sister city took the lead, as well in numbers as in influence and riches.

Bussorah founded. A.H. XVII. A.D. 638.

[1] The pest of gigantic and noisome mosquitoes, issuing from the swamps and groves in overpowering swarms, is complained of by all travellers in this quarter. See, e.g., Loftus's *Travels*, p. 280.

Kûfa founded. A.H. XVII. A.D. 638.

The founding of KÛFA was on this wise. The Arabs had been in occupation of Medâin for some months, when, a deputation visiting Medîna on certain business, the Caliph was startled by their sallow and unwholesome look, and asked the cause. They replied that the city air did not agree with the Arab temperament. Thereupon, search was ordered for some more healthy and congenial spot; such as, approaching nearer to the desert air, and also well supplied with wholesome water, would not be cut off (so the watchful Ruler stipulated) from ready help in any time of need.[1] They looked everywhere on the desert outskirts, and found no place answering these conditions so well as the plain of Kûfa, not far from Hîra, on the banks of the western branch of the Euphrates. Omar confirmed the choice, and left it in each man's option, either to remain at Medâin, or transfer his habitation thither. The new capital suited the Arabs well, and to it accordingly they migrated in great numbers. The dwellings, as at Bussorah, were made at first of reeds.[2] But fires were frequent; and, in the autumn, after a disastrous conflagration, the Caliph gave permission that both cities might be built of brick. 'The flitting camp,' he wrote, 'is the only place for the crusader. But if ye must have a more permanent abode, be it so; only let no man have more houses than three, nor exceed the modest exemplar of the Prophet's dwelling-place.' So the city was rebuilt, and the streets laid out in regular lines. The centre was kept an open square for the chief Mosque, which was constructed with a portico for shade, and ornamented with marble pillars from the palaces at Hîra.[3] Another square was

October, A.D. 638.

[1] We are constantly reminded, in the tradition of this period, of Omar's nervous apprehension lest his armies should be tempted beyond the reach of succour in case of any disaster befalling them.

[2] Reeds, wattle, and mud. (*Belâdzori.*)

[3] The square was set out thus. A powerful archer, from the centre, shot arrows on all four sides; where the arrows reached was the limit, and the square was measured out accordingly. The main streets were 40 cubits wide, the cross ones 20, and the lanes 7.

left clear for the market; and to every man was allotted ground proportioned to the number of his household. Sád built for himself a spacious edifice, with materials carried from the royal buildings at Hîra, and he reared in front of it a gateway to prevent intrusion from the market-place, which was hard by. The rumour of 'the Castle of Sád' troubled the simple-minded Caliph, and he sent Mohammed ibn Maslama with a rescript commanding that the gateway should be pulled down. Arrived at Kûfa, the envoy was invited by Sád to enter his mansion as a guest, but he declined. Sád therefore came forth, and received the letter at his hands, which ran thus:—'It hath been reported to me that thou hast builded for thyself a palace, and people call it *The Castle of Sád*; moreover, that thou hast reared a gateway betwixt thee and the people. It is not thy castle; rather is it the castle of perdition. Whatsoever is needful to secure the treasury, that thou mayest guard and lock; but the gateway which shutteth out the people from thee, that thou shalt break down.' Sád obeyed the order; but he protested that his object in building the portal had been falsely reported, and Omar accepted the excuse.

Irâc settled with the *Fil-'aheen*. The Sawâd.

The settlement of the land was the next concern. The Sawâd, or rich plain of Chaldæa, having been taken, with some few exceptions, by force of arms, was claimed by the Arab soldiery as prize of war. The judgment and equity of Omar is conspicuous in the abatement of this demand. After counsel held with his advisers at Medîna, the Caliph ordered that cultivators who had fled during the operations in Irâc from fear, as well as those who had kept to their homes throughout, should be treated as *Zimmies*, or protected subjects, and confirmed in their holdings on payment of a moderate tribute. The royal forests and domains, the lands of the nobles, and of those who had opposed the Moslem arms, and also endowments of the Fire-temples, were all confiscated; but the demand for their division as

ordinary prize was denied. Equitable distribution was impossible, and the attempt would but breed bad blood amongst the people. The necessities also of the great system of canals, and of the postal and other services, as a first charge upon the revenues, demanded that the public lands should be kept intact. Such were the ostensible reasons. But a profounder cause underlay the order. Omar would maintain the martial spirit of his followers at any cost, and render it perpetual. With him it was of first necessity that the Arabs should not settle anywhere but in camp, or other place of arms, nor engage at all in husbandry, lest they became fixed to the soil, and so the spirit militant decline. The people of Arabia must in every land be men of arms, ready at a moment's notice for the field, a race distinct and dominant. Therefore, much to the discontent of the claimants, not only were the confiscated lands held undivided, but, from the border of the Syrian desert to the mountain range of Persia, the sale of any portion of the soil, whether confiscated or not, was absolutely forbidden. Thus there arose a double protection to the native tenantry, who under no pretext could be evicted from their lands. The country also, remaining in the hands of its own cultivators, was nursed, and became a rich and permanent source of revenue.

Crown lands and endowments of Bussorah and Kûfa.

The confiscated lands scattered over the province were administered by agents of the State, and the profits shared between the captors and the Crown. The prize domains of Kûfa—conquered, that is to say, by the armies of Khâlid and of Sâd—were much more extensive than those of Bussorah. Shortly after it was founded, the inhabitants of Bussorah sent a deputation to urge that its endowments should be increased, and its income made more adequate to their responsibilities. 'Kûfa,' said Ahraf, the spokesman from Bussorah, 'is a well-watered garden which yieldeth in season its harvest of dates, while ours is a brackish land. Part

bordereth on the desert, and part upon the sea, which laveth it with a briny flood. Compared with Kûfa, our poor are many, and our rich are few. Grant us, therefore, of thy bounty.' Recognising the justice of the demand, Omar made a substantial addition to the endowments of Bussorah from the Crown lands of the Chosroes. But, although Kûfa was richer, it had heavier obligations to discharge than the sister city. Its government had a far wider range; and the charges of four lieutenants, posted with strong garrisons at Holwân and Masbazân in the east, at Mosul in the north, and at Kirckesia in the west, had to be provided from the resources at the command of Sâd.

Kûfa and Bussorah hotbeds of faction and sedition.

Kûfa and Bussorah, thus unique in their origin, had a singular influence on the destinies of the Caliphate and of Islam itself. The vast majority of the population came from the Peninsula, and were of pure Arabian blood. The tribes which, with their families, scenting from afar the prey of Persia, kept streaming into Chaldæa from every corner of Arabia, settled chiefly in these two cities. At Kûfa the races from Yemen and the south predominated; at Bussorah, from the north. Rapidly they grew into two great and luxurious capitals, with an Arab population each of from 150,000 to 200,000 souls.[1] On the literature, theology, and politics of

[1] In Kûfa the southern tribes, with the Beni Morâd at their head, greatly outnumbered the northern, which latter belonged to the Beni Nizâr. The two nationalities inhabited separate divisions of the city, and prayed each in its own Mosque. Bussorah, on the contrary, was almost entirely peopled from the north; and the five chief clans—Azd, Temîm, Bekr, Abd al Caya, and the Natives of Medîna (Ansâr)—occupied each a separate quarter of its own.

In the time of Ziâd (A.H. 50), Belâdzori tells us that in Bussorah the register (Dewân or civil list) numbered 80,000 warriors, and their wives and children 120,000, all drawing pensions from the State. Kûfa is rated at 60,000 fighting men on the roll, with families numbering 80,000 souls. The proportion of families to fighting men must surely have been much greater, as the harems of all of them swarmed with children; and the Arab population of each city was probably considerably greater than I have ventured (on the authority of Belâdzori) to note in the text. There also must have been a great multitude other than Arabs—dependants, clients, slaves, &c., Moslem and non-Moslem; so that, as the cities grew, it is not improbable that they

Islam, these cities had a greater influence than the whole Moslem world besides. Service in the field was desultory and intermittent. The intervals of rest were spent in ennui. Excepting when enlivened by the fruits of some new victory, the secluded harems afforded their lords but little variety of recreation or amusement. Otherwise the time was whiled away in the converse of social knots; and in these, while they discussed the problems of the day, they loved still more to live in the past, and fight their battles over again. Hence tradition. But the debates and gossip of these clubs (to which we owe the two great schools of Bussorah and Kûfa) too often degenerated into tribal rivalry and domestic scandal. The people became petulant and factious; and both cities grew into hotbeds of turbulence and sedition. The Bedouin element, conscious of its strength, was jealous of the Coreish, and impatient at whatever checked its capricious humour. Thus factions sprang up which, controlled by the strong and wise arm of Omar, broke loose under weaker Caliphs, eventually rent the unity of Islam, and brought on disastrous days, which, but for its marvellous vitality, must have proved fatal to the Faith.

numbered, of all classes, over 300,000 each. The population would fluctuate according to the numbers engaged in the field.

CHAPTER XIX.

CAMPAIGN IN NORTHERN SYRIA.

A.H. XV. A.D. 636.

Abu Obeida's advance on Northern Syria. End of A.H. XIV. A.D. 635.

To recover the thread of events in Syria, it is necessary to go back so far as the battle of Fihl. At the close of the fourteenth year of the Hegira, Abu Obeida, leaving Amru to follow up the victory in Palestine, and Yezîd as governor to hold Damascus, marched with the remainder of his forces northward upon Hims, from whence the emperor had been watching the progress of his enemies. He carried with him Dzul Kelâa, who, posted with his Himyar column beyond Damascus, had been, ever since the siege, covering the city from attack by the Romans on the north. They had advanced but a little way, when they were stopped by two Roman armies under Theodore and Shanas.[1] Dividing his forces, Abu Obeida took Shanas himself in hand, and left Khâlid to deal with the other. Damascus no longer covered, Theodore thought to make a sudden dash upon it. But Yezîd, with his garrison, was ready to confront him; and Khâlid, with a flying column, was immediately in pursuit. Taken thus before and behind, Theodore's army was cut to pieces, but few escaping. Abu Obeida had meanwhile engaged Shanas and put him to flight. Meeting no further opposition, the Arabs continued their march, and attacked Báalbek, which after a short siege capitulated.

Hims [Emessa] besieged,

Abu Obeida then advanced straight upon Hims, and closely invested it. Heraclius, on the defeat of Theodore,

[1] At Marj Rum, to the N.W. of Damascus.

retired hastily on Roha,[1] from whence he endeavoured to raise the Bedouins of Mesopotamia with the view of effecting a diversion. This effort (as we have seen) was defeated by Sád, who, making an inroad on Hît and Kirckesia, thus recalled the tribes to the defence of their desert homes. The siege of Hims, prosecuted with vigour, was bravely resisted. But the expectation of promised succour died away; the severity of winter failed to make the Arabs retire, the courage of the beleaguered garrison fell, and their sallies became less frequent and effective. When the siege had been thus protracted many weeks, suddenly an earthquake, with successive shocks, breached the battlements. The governor, finding the position no longer tenable, offered to capitulate; and the Moslems, unaware of the full extent of the mischief, readily gave the same terms to the prostrate city as had been given to Damascus. In answer to the despatch announcing the capture, and forwarding the royal share of the booty, Omar bade Abu Obeida to press forward; and promising further reinforcements, counselled him to gain over the powerful Bedouin tribes on the border, and strengthen his army thus.

Dzul Cáda, A.H. XIV. January, A.D. 636,

and taken, A.H. XV. Spring, A.D. 636.

Leaving, therefore, a garrison in Hims under Obâda, one of the Twelve leaders,[2] Abu Obeida resumed his northward march. Hâma, and other towns of inferior note, tendered their submission.[3] The strongly fortified city of Laodicea alone showed an obstinate front; but the Arabs made a feint of withdrawing, and then, a squadron, darting suddenly back in the early morning through an open portal, seized the defences, and overpowered the garrison. Advancing still to the north, Khâlid, with great slaughter, defeated the Romans near Kinnisrîn—a stronghold which, after a short defence,

March continued northwards.

[1] Edessa.

[2] The Twelve 'Leaders' chosen by Mahomet at the Pledge of Acaba. (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 134.)

[3] The church of Hâma (*Epiphania*) was turned into a mosque. Arrestân (*Arethusa*) on the Orontes, Shaizar (*Larissa*), Maára, and other places of less importance, are mentioned as taken possession of on this march.

was seized and dismantled.[1] In the battle we are told that a prince called Minas, in dignity second only to the Emperor, was slain. Aleppo next fell, after a brief resistance; and then Abu Obeida turned his arms westward to Antioch. In this, the famous capital of Northern Syria, and emporium of merchandise, art, and luxury, the broken troops of the Empire rallied. And here, at length, within the great lines of circumvallation which ran along the surrounding heights, we might have expected Heraclius to make a stand; and, drawing fresh troops together, to battle against the disasters which had befallen Syria. But no effort befitting the crisis appears to have been even thought of. A heavy battle, indeed, was fought on the wooded plain outside the walls; but the garrison was driven back, and the city, surrounded on all sides, at last capitulated.[2] Such are the details, comprised within the space of a few lines, which tell us whatever we know of the loss of Northern Syria, stretching from Damascus to the hilly range of Asia Minor.

Siege and surrender of *Antioch.*

Eastwards, in the direction of Aleppo, the Romans made a last but feeble attempt to regain their footing. They were again hopelessly beaten, their leader slain, and great numbers taken prisoner. The arm of the Empire was for the moment paralysed, and Syria, from the Great River to the sea-

Northern Syria reduced.

[1] Kinnisrîn or *Chalcis.* According to some, the inhabitants were forced to retire to Antioch, from whence they returned on peace being restored. Others say that the city with its churches was, like Damascus, divided. But the received tradition is that the people were treated with moderation, and that only one plot of ground was taken possession of for a mosque.

[2] Antioch, '*Queen of the East*, was the third metropolis of the world. . . . Its wide circuit of many miles was surrounded by walls of astonishing height and thickness, which had been carried across ravines and over mountain summits with such daring magnificence of conception as to give the city the aspect of being defended by its own encircling mountains.' (Farrar's *St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 288.) The ravages, not many years before, of the Persian invasion must have still left their mark upon this noble city, and possibly affected its means of defence. Still, we might reasonably have expected something more from tradition than the simple mention of a battle outside the famous citadel of Northern Syria, followed by its capitulation. But the *history* of the fall of Syria is little more than a calendar of dates and places.

shore, brought entirely under the sway of Islam. The Arab tribes, as well as the settled inhabitants of towns and villages, became tributary, and bound by engagements to keep the conquerors informed of the movements of the enemy. Before long time, the Bedouins, who sit ever loose to the trammels of religion, went for the most part over to the Moslem faith. But the urban population, as a whole, resisted the inducements to abandon Christianity; and, although reduced, as the Corân demanded, to an humbled and politically degraded state, they were yet treated with moderation, their churches spared, and their worship respected. They either reconciled themselves to their unhappy fate, or retired unmolested into Roman territory.

State of the Christian population.

When Heraclius beheld his armies, one after another, defeated, and his efforts to rally the Bedouin tribes end only in secession and hostile risings throughout Mesopotamia, he gave up Syria as lost, and fell back from Roha upon Samsât. But he was in peril even there. For, after reducing Membij and other fortresses within the Syrian frontier, Khâlid made a dash into Cilicia, and ravaged Marásh and the country lying to the west of Samsât.[1] The Emperor, alarmed at his line of retreat being thus threatened, retired altogether from the scene; and, relinquishing the fairest provinces of his realm —provinces sacred to the Christian faith—into the hands of his enemies, resolved to recross the Bosphorus. Wending his sad way westward, he reached (so the Arabian annalists tell us) an eminence from whence a last glimpse might be had of the wooded hills and sunny plains that were vanishing in the southern horizon. Heraclius turned to gaze, exclaiming, 'Peace be with thee, holy and blessed land! Syria, fare thee well! There is for me no more returning unto thee; neither shall any Roman visit thee for ever, but in fear and

Heraclius retires to Constantinople.

[1] Samsât, or Shamsât, the same as *Samosata*. Besides Marásh (*Germanica*) and Menbij (*Hierapolis*), Tell Azáz, Doluk, and many other places in this direction were overrun by Khâlid upon this occasion.

trembling, until the accursed Antichrist shall come.'[1] It was but ten years before that the same Emperor, performing on foot a pilgrimage to Jerusalem through this same beautiful province, to commemorate the recovery of the 'true Cross' and his own signal victories in the East, had cast aside a rude missive from the Arabian Prophet demanding his submission to Islam. What seemed then the wild phantasy of a maniac was now an accomplished fact.

Story of Jabala, the Ghassanide Prince.

A similar despatch from Mahomet had been at the same time received by Jabala, last Prince of the Ghassanide dynasty. Jabala (so the tradition runs) asked the Emperor's leave to chastise the insolent Arab, but was bidden to swell the imperial train at Jerusalem.[2] And now Jabala was to share his Master's fate. At the head of the Beni Ghassân, he had fought loyally by the side of the Romans, till, disheartened by the ignoble flight of Heraclius, he turned to Abu Obeida, and embraced Islam. Splendidly clad, and with a pompous following, he visited Medîna, where the people, familiar with the illustrious name, and with the panegyric of their poet Hassân on his condescension and munificence, received him with peculiar honours. He then accompanied the Caliph to perform the pilgrimage at Mecca. There a Bedouin chanced to tread, as he passed by, upon his flowing robe, causing him to stumble and fall. The haughty prince struck the offender on the face. To his amazement he was summoned before the Caliph, who ordered that the law of retaliation[3] should have its course, and that the Bedouin might have his satisfaction by returning the blow. 'What!' cried Jabala; 'I, the Prince of the Ghassân, and he a common Bedouin of the desert!' 'Yea,' replied Omar;

[1] The meaning is somewhat obscure. The words are, 'until there be born the Accursed one. And I would not that he should be born; for his deeds shall not be good; and he will devise evil against Rome.'

[2] *Life of Mahomet*, p. 384.

[3] The Jewish law of retaliation—'eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth,' &c.—is maintained in the Corân. See Sura ii. v. 179, and v. v. 53.

'for in Islam all men are alike.' Stung by the affront, Jabala disappeared during the night, and retired to Constantinople. There he returned to the profession of the Christian faith, and was hospitably entertained at the Byzantine Court. The tale has been garnished by the touch of romance; and we are even told that, pining after his old desert haunts and friends, he offered again to recant and embrace Islam, if only Omar would promise to give him one of his daughters to wife. But so much is certain, that he died an exile, and left behind him a colony at Constantinople of his Arab followers.[1]

Exchange of gifts between the Byzantine Queen and the Caliph's wife.

I may notice here an interesting tradition, showing that friendly relations subsisted at times between the Caliph and the Byzantine Court. Omar's wife, Omm Kolthûm, the daughter of Aly, sent to the Empress a royal gift of frankincense, and precious things fit for the toilet of a lady; and the Empress sent by the hands of the envoy in return a

[1] The story is variously told, but the main facts, as given in the text, appear beyond doubt. Tradition gives us first a romantic tale of what happened at 'the Iron Bridge' on the Orontes, where Jabala was posted to cover Antioch. There a Mussulman chief was brought in a prisoner to Jabala's camp. He happened to be descended from the same ancestry, and on his reciting the poem of Hassân on the glories of the Ghassanide dynasty, he was dismissed with rich presents; and, in the end, Jabala himself went over to the Moslem camp.

After he had retired to the Byzantine Court, an envoy arrived at Constantinople, with diplomatic communications from Medina, and to him Jabala made known his sorrows and pining after the desert. Pressed to return to Arabia, he agreed to do so, if Omar would give him one of his daughters in marriage and designate him his successor. He at the same time sent a rich gift to Hassân, who composed a poem, still extant, in token of his gratitude. The following is a couplet from the same:—

'Jabala, the son of Jafna, forgot me not, when he reigned in Syria,
Nor yet after he had returned at Constantinople to the Christian faith.'

We are to believe that Omar accepted the offer! but the officer who carried the answer to Constantinople found that Jabala had died (A.H. XX.). Others hold that Jabala survived to the reign of Muâvia, who tempted him in vain to return to Syria by the promise of a property at Damascus.

The colony of his descendants and followers is said to have survived at Constantinople till the fall of the Cæsars; and a colour of likelihood is given to the statement from the frequent recurrence of the name *Gabala* among the notables at the court of Heraclius' successors. (See *Caussin de Perceval*, vol. iii. p. 510.)

beautiful necklace. Thereupon Omar gave command to call a general assembly.[1] Then he propounded the question of the necklace. Some said, 'The Queen is not a subject; she hath sent a present for Omm Kolthûm; let her keep it;' other some, 'It is but a gift in return for a gift.' But Omar said: 'The envoy was the envoy of the Moslems, and they have got this in return for his journey.' So he commanded, and it was made over to the treasury; but he gave his wife the value of it from his privy purse.[2]

In this campaign, the chivalry of Khâlid made such an impression upon Omar that he received him back into favour, and bestowed on him the command of Kinnisrîn. 'Verily,' he said, in announcing the appointment, 'Khâlid hath proved himself a prince among men. Blessed be the memory of Abu Bekr, for verily he knew mankind better than I.' The reconcilement, however, was not of long duration.[3]

[1] It was the same call as a general call to prayer. (See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 205.)

[2] The tradition is given in Ibn al Athîr. There is always a tendency to magnify the simplicity and self-abnegation of the first two Caliphs, and something in the story may be due to this. But the tradition is of a character otherwise not likely to have been invented; and there is nothing in it very improbable, as the two courts had dealings with each other, not always unfriendly.

[3] According to some authorities, this command was conferred on Khâlid by Omar on his visit to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XX.

CONQUEST OF PALESTINE.

A.H. XV. A.D. 636.

Territorial division of Palestine.

Palestine, according to the Arabs, is the tract that lies west of the Dead Sea. If a line were drawn from the top of the sea obliquely to Mount Carmel, all to the south of it would be Palestine. The zone immediately to the north of the line, including the Ghôr, or valley watered by the Jordan, is called *Ordonna*, or the province of the *Jordan*. The country still farther north is *Syria*, and that to the east of the Jordan the *Haurân*.[1]

Palestine invaded.

The first inroads of the Arabs were upon the province of the Jordan. Issuing from Arabia, their beaten course, as we have seen, was the highway to Damascus, along the pilgrim route of the present day, to the east of the Dead Sea. The base of operations was, throughout the Syrian campaign, at Jâbia, a town some little distance east of the Sea of Tiberias; from whence, as a rendezvous, columns could be forwarded, by the great military roads, either to Damascus, Báalbek, and the north; or, again, to Tiberias, the Jordan, and Palestine. Soon after the siege of Damascus and battle of Fihl, the greater part of the province of the Jordan fell rapidly under the arms of Amru and Shorahbîl. In Palestine proper, with Egypt in its rear, and Cæsarea open to reinforcements by sea, the Roman power remained, for some

[1] Palestine (*Filistîn*) was thus confined to the lower and western portion of the Holy Land, south of a line from Jerusalem and Jericho to Cæsarea. The province of the Jordan (*Ordonna*) extended as far north-west as Sûr, Tyre, and Acca. To the north of this, again, was Syria or *Shâm*. (See *Caussin de Perceval*, vol. iii. p. 425.)

time longer, unbroken. The province was heavily garrisoned at Gaza, Ramleh, Jerusalem, and other places. The Patrician Artabûn, commanding in Palestine, divided his army into two parts. One guarded Jerusalem. With the other, taking his stand at Ajnadein, some distance to the west, he sought to hold the invaders advancing from Beisân, in check. This foolhardy general is said to have invited Amru to a conference, having laid an ambush by the way to slay him.[1] But he was outwitted by the wily Arab, and, before long, found himself cut off all round from his communications with Cæsarea, Jerusalem, and Ramleh. Amru then attacked the Roman army; and a heavy and decisive engagement took place at Ajnadein. Of its details we know little, for we are simply told that 'the battle of Ajnadein was fierce and bloody as the battle of Wacûsa.' After great slaughter, Artabûn was driven back upon Jerusalem. Amru encamped on the battle-field, and the way was now clear to the Holy City. But he took the precaution first to secure his rear, still bristling with posts and garrisons. One after another —Gaza, Sebastia, Nablûs, Lydda, Beit-Jibrîn, and Joppa— either fell before his arms, or, without a blow, submitted to the Moslem yoke. Jerusalem and Ramleh alone held out.[2]

Battle of Ajnadein. A.H. XV. Spring, A.D. 636.

[1] Artabûn is called 'the shallowest and the unluckiest of the Romans.' Omar said of him: 'We shall play off Artabûn the Arab (meaning Amru) against Artabûn the Roman, and see what cometh.' Artabûn thought to throw Amru off his guard, by telling him, at the interview which is said to have taken place between them, that he was going to retire on Egypt. When Omar was told of the ambush and Amru's escape by taking another road, he said, 'Verily, Amru is a lucky fellow.'

[2] *Ramleh* was not founded till the eighth century. The place was previously named Rama (Arimathea), near which Ramleh was built; but tradition, by anticipation, always calls it Ramleh.

Gaza, according to some, was captured in the first invasion, two years before. The following places are mentioned as now reduced:—Sebastia (on the way from Cæsarea to Nablûs, where is the tomb of John the son of Zacharias); Beit-Jibrîn (or *Beth Gabara*); Yabna; Ramh (Marj Arjûn); Ascalon; Amwûs. In fact, the whole country, with the single exception of Cæsarea, now fell into the hands of the Arabs and became tributary.

The conquest of Palestine, however, like that of Syria, is a mere epitome, with great confusion of dates. This is forcibly illustrated by the perfunctory

Towards Jerusalem, a city surrounded by associations almost as sacred as those of Mecca itself, Amru first directed his steps. On his approach, Artabûn, dispirited by his late defeat, and unwilling to risk the now desperate issue of a siege, retired with his army to Egypt. The Patriarch, upon this, sued for peace. But one condition he made, that Omar should come himself to the Holy City, and there, in person, settle the capitulation.[1] The Caliph, nothing loth, braved the objections of those about him, and at once set out for Syria.[2] Taking the beaten track before described, he journeyed direct for Jâbia. It was a memorable occasion, being the first progress of a Caliph beyond the limits of Arabia. Abu Obeida, Yezîd, and Khâlid, came from the north in state, to welcome him. A brilliant cavalcade, robed in Syrian brocade, and mounted on steeds richly caparisoned, they rode forth as he approached. At the sight of all their finery, Omar's spirit was stirred within him. He stooped down, and, gathering a handful of gravel, flung it at the astonished chiefs. 'Avaunt!' he cried; 'is it thus attired that ye come out to meet me? All changed thus in

Capitulation of Jerusalem. A.H. XV. End of A.D. 636.

Omar journeys to Jâbia;

notice of the important battle of Ajnadein, and the uncertainty surrounding its chronology. Several authorities place it even before Yermûk, giving the date as on a Saturday, in Jumâd I., A.H. XIII. (634 A.D.). As the date given really fell upon a Saturday, Weil adopts this view. But it is opposed to the consistent though very summary narrative of the best authorities, as well as to the natural course of the campaign, which, as we have seen, began on the *east* side of the Jordan, all the eastern province being reduced before the Arabs ventured to cross over to the well-garrisoned country west of the Jordan.

[1] It was foretold (so the tradition runs) in the Jewish books, that Jerusalem would be captured by a king whose name was formed but of three letters (as in that of Omar عمر), and whose description tallied otherwise so exactly with that of the Caliph that there could be no doubt that he was the personage meant by the prophecy. When this was told to Artabûn, he lost all heart, and departed to Egypt; whereupon the Patriarch sent to make terms with Amru. The tradition is curious, and, however fabulous in appearance, may possibly have had some foundation in fact.

[2] 'Whither away?' said Aly to the Caliph; 'wilt thou go and fight with dogs?' 'Nay,' replied Omar; 'not so, but I mean to visit the seat of war, before Abbâs is taken, and the flames of sedition burst forth.' He then started, leaving Aly in charge of Medîna. But the tradition has a strong Abbasside tinge.

the space of two short years! Verily, had it been after two hundred, ye would have deserved to be degraded.' 'Commander of the Faithful!' they replied; 'this that thou seest is but the outside; beneath it (and they drew aside their robes) behold our armour.' 'Enough,' answered Omar, still much displeased; 'go forward.' So they fell in with his party, and alighted at Jâbia. Shortly after, the camp was startled by the appearance of a troop of strange horse. It was a deputation from Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.[1] Terms of capitulation were soon agreed to, and the treaty, duly witnessed, was carried by the visitors back to their master; whereupon the gates of Jerusalem, and of Ramleh also, were thrown open to the Moslem leaders. Amru and Shorahbîl, thus relieved from further opposition, left their troops and presented themselves at Jâbia. Omar rode forth to meet them; and they kissed his stirrup, while he, dismounting, affectionately embraced them both.

and visits Jerusalem.

Dismissing the other generals to their respective commands, the Caliph, carrying with him Amru and Shorahbîl, resumed his journey westward, and, crossing the Jordan below the Lake of Tiberias, proceeded thus to Jerusalem. They gave him a palfrey to ride on, which pranced with jingling bells after the fashion of Syria. He disliked the motion. 'What aileth the animal?' he said; 'I know not who hath taught thee this strange gait.' So he dismounted and rode upon his own horse again.[2] Arrived at Jerusalem, the Caliph received the Patriarch and citizens with kindness and condescension. He granted them the same privileges as to the most favoured cities; imposed on the inhabitants an easy tribute, and confirmed them in possession of all their

[1] The name is not given by the Arabian annalists. We learn it from Theophanes.

[2] The received account is that Omar made this (his first) journey to Syria on *horseback*; the second (on the Roman invasion by sea), riding on a *camel*; the third (at the great plague) on a *mule*; and the last (his progress through Syria) on an *ass*.

shrines and churches. Jerusalem was to the Moslem an object of intense veneration, not only as the cradle of Judaism and Christianity, but as the first *Kibla* of Islam itself—that is, the sacred spot to which the Faithful turn in prayer; and also as the place visited by the Prophet on his mysterious journey by night to heaven.[1] At the crest of the sacred mount there is a stony projection, which the tradition of the day had marked as Jacob's pillow. The fond imagination of the Moslems has fixed upon this as the very point in the 'Farther Temple,' from which the winged steed mounted by Mahomet took its upward flight; and in a depression of the rock the eye, or the hand, of faith still traces the outline of the Prophet's foot imprinted there as he sprang into his airy saddle. It was close to this that Omar laid the foundation of the Mosque which, to this day, bears his name.[2]

[1] The heavenly journey is thus referred to in the Corân: 'Praise be to Him, who carried His servant by night to the FARTHER TEMPLE (*Masjid al Acksa*), the environs of which we have made bleseed.' Sura xvii. (The 'Farther Temple,' in opposition to the Nearer Temple, the Kaaba.) See the tale, *Life of Mahomet*, p. 126. Jerusalem was the Kibla of Mahomet and his followers all the time he worshipped at Mecca. In the second year after his flight to Medina, the Prophet was suddenly instructed to turn instead to Mecca, to which ever since, the Moslems have turned at prayer. (*Ibid.* p. 198.)

[2] The *Haram* is the sacred inclosure on the S.E. corner of Mount Zion. It is minutely described by Ali Bey, vol. ii. p. 214, with its two great mosques, *Masjid al Acksa* (said to be the Basilica of the Virgin) and *Kubbet al Sakhra* (the Dome of the Stone),—where also will be found plans and sketches of the same. Until the Crimean War, the Haram was guarded, as sacredly as Mecca itself, from the tread of an infidel. But it is now more or less accessible, and an elaborate survey of the two Mosques and their surroundings has recently been made by the Palestine Exploration Society: see their *Proceedings*, January 1880.

The *Kubbet al Sakhra*, or 'Dome of the Stone,' has been built polygonal to meet the shape of the 'Stone,' or Rock referred to in the text, which gives its name to the Mosque. This rock rises to a height of six or seven feet from a base, according to Ali Bey, 33 feet in diameter (or, according to others, 57 feet long and 43 wide). The architecture is Byzantine, but Greek builders were no doubt engaged for its construction. There is probably little, if anything, of original Christian building in the present Haram.

Ali Bey describes the *Sakhra* itself as a stony apex cropping out from the rock, which, when Mahomet stood upon it, 'sensible of the happiness of bearing the holy burden, depressed itself, and becoming soft like wax, received the print of his holy foot upon the upper part. . . . This print is now covered with

Christian tradition regarding Omar's visit to Jerusalem.

Mahometan tradition gives no further detail respecting this memorable visit. But we are told by Christian writers that Omar accompanied Sophronius over the city, visited the various places of pilgrimage, and graciously inquired into their history. As the appointed hour came round, the Patriarch bade the Caliph to perform his orisons on the spot where they chanced to be, namely, the Church of the Resurrection. But he declined to pray either there or in the Church of Constantine, where a carpet had been spread for him—alleging, as the reason, that if he were to pray there, his followers would deem it their duty to oust the Christians and take possession of the church for ever afterwards, as a place where Moslem prayer had once been offered up. He also visited Bethlehem. There, having prayed in the Church of the Nativity, he gave nevertheless a rescript to the Patriarch who accompanied him on the pious errand, securing the Christians in possession of the building, with the condition that not more than one Mussulman should ever enter at a time; but the stipulation, we are told, was disregarded, and a Mosque was eventually erected there, as well as on the site of the porch of the Church of Constantine.[1]

a large sort of cage of gilt metal wire, worked in such a manner that the print cannot be seen on account of the darkness within, but it may be touched with the hand through a hole made on purpose. The believers, after having touched the print, proceed to sanctify themselves by passing the hand over the face and beard.' (*Travels of Ali Bey*, vol. ii. p. 220.)

[1] According to Theophanes, Omar, clad in unclean garments of camel hair, demanded of Sophronius to be shown over the Temple of Solomon, and was with difficulty constrained to change them by the protestations of the Patriarch, who wept over the threatened 'abomination of desolation.' But the general tenor of Christian tradition (whatever its worth may be) is, as in the text, altogether favourable to Omar's courtesy and condescension. Sophronius, we are told, showed him the stony pillow of Jacob. It was covered with soil and sweepings. Whereupon Omar, with his own hands, assisted by his people, set to work to clear the spot, and the rock (*Sakhra*) having been laid bare, the foundation of the Great Mosque was built upon it.

The most unlikely part of these traditions is that which supposes that Omar would have ever thought of praying in a church adorned by pictures, crosses, &c., though of course it is possible that he may have made the excuse given in the text out of courtesy and politeness.

Whatever truth there may be in these traditions, Omar did not prolong his visit to Jerusalem or its environs. Having settled the matter for which he came, he proceeded to divide Palestine into two provinces; one of which he assigned to the government of Jerusalem, and the other to that of Ramleh. He then returned by the way that he came to Medîna.[1]

Omar returns to Medîna.

Thus was Syria, from the farthest north to the border of Egypt, within the space of three years, lost to Christendom. One reflects with wonder at the feeble resistance offered by the Byzantine power, both military and naval, and by its many strongholds of antiquity and renown, to this sudden inroad. The affinities of the Syrian Bedouins to the Arabian nation facilitated no doubt the conquest. There was also an element of weakness in the settled population; for luxurious living had demoralised the effeminate race and rendered it unable to resist the onset of the wild and fanatic invaders. Still worse, they had no heart to fight. What patriotic vigour might have still survived, was lost in religious strife. Sects rejoiced each in the humiliation of the other; and, as is usual in such controversies, the finer the distinction, the more inveterate the hatred thereby engendered. Loyalty was thus smothered by bitter jealousies, and there are not wanting instances even of active assistance rendered to the enemy.[2] There may have been among some, even a

Causes which facilitated the conquest of Syria.

[1] It is of this journey the tale is told that in the midst of one of his discourses Omar was interrupted by an ecclesiastic. The Caliph quoted from the Corân the passage—*Whom the Lord misleadeth, for him there is no guide* (Sura iv. 90, 142; xvii. 99; and xviii. 6), whereupon the Christian cried out: *Nay! God misleadeth no one.* Omar threatened that he would behead the Christian if he continued his interruption, and so the Christian held his peace. The story is told both in the *Romance of Wâckidy*, and in the *Fatooh al Shâm*; and though wanting in authority, gives truly the *popular impression* of the doctrine of Predestination as taught in the Corân. (See *The Corân: its Composition and Teaching*, Christian Knowledge Society, p. 56.)

[2] The monks of the 'Convent of Khâlid,' near Damascus, received a permanent remission of their land tax as a reward for the treacherous aid rendered by them at the siege of that city. A similar concession was enjoyed by the Samaritans, who hated both Jews and Christians equally, and aided

sense of relief in the equal though contemptuous licence given, by the toleration or haughty indifference of the conquerors, to all alike. But there was a still deeper cause, and that was the growing decrepitude of the Roman empire. No vigour remained to drive back the shock of barbarian invaders. And while northern hordes could by degrees amalgamate with the nations which they overran, the exclusive faith and the intolerant teaching of Islam kept the Arabs a race distinct and dominant.

The Arabs did not settle in Syria to the same extent as in Chaldæa.

The conquerors did not spread themselves abroad in Syria, as in Chaldæa. They founded no such Arabian towns and military settlements as Bussorah and Kûfa. The country and climate were less congenial, and the beautiful scenery of the land of brooks of water and depths springing out of valleys and hills, the land of vines and fig-trees and pomegranates, the land of oil-olive and honey, offered fewer attractions to the Arabian races than the heated sandy plains of the Tigris and Euphrates, with their desert garb of tamarisk and groves of the familiar date. They came to Syria as conquerors; and, as conquerors, they settled largely, particularly the southern tribes, in Damascus, Hims, and other centres of administration. But the body of the native Syrians remained after the conquest substantially the same as before; and through long centuries of degradation they clung, as to some extent they still cling, to their ancestral faith.

Humiliation of Jews and Christians.

We read in later days of the *Ordinance of Omar*, to regulate the conditions of Christian communities throughout Islam. But it would be a libel on that tolerant Ruler to credit him with the greater part of these observances. It is true that the stamp of inferiority—according to the Divine injunction, *Fight against the people of the Book, Jews and Chris-*

the Arabs as guides and spies; but the fruits of their treachery were resumed by Yezîd.

Omar made an assignment from the tithes to a colony of Christian lepers near Jâbia; but it seems to have been a purely charitable grant.

tians, until they pay tribute with their hands and are humbled [1]—was branded upon them from the first; but the worst disabilities of that intolerant Ordinance were not imposed till a later period. Introduced by degrees, these gradually became, through practice and precedent, the law of the land. At the first the exactions of the conquerors, besides the universal tribute, were limited to the demand of a yearly supply of oil-olive and other food, and the obligation to entertain Moslem travellers on their journey for three days at a time. But when the Caliphate was established at Damascus, its pomp and pride could no longer brook the semblance even of social equality, and hence the badge of an inferior race must be shown at every step. The dress of both sexes and of their slaves must be distinguished by broad stripes of yellow. They were forbidden to appear on horseback; and if they rode on mule or ass, their stirrups must be of wood, and the saddle known by knobs of the same material. Their graves must be level with the ground, and the mark of the devil placed on the lintel of their doors. Their children must be taught by Moslem masters; and the race, however able or well qualified, was proscribed from aspiring to any office of high emolument or trust. Besides the existing churches spared at the conquest, no new building must be erected for the purposes of worship; free entry into all their holy places must be allowed at the pleasure of the Moslem; no cross must remain in view outside, nor any church bells rung. They must refrain from processions in the street at Easter and other solemn seasons; and in short from anything, whether by outward symbol, word, or deed, in rivalry or derogation of the royal faith. Such was the so-called *Code of Omar*.[2] Enforced with less or greater stringency in different lands and under different

[1] Sura ix. 30.

[2] In some treaties given by Belâdzori and others, as concluded at the first conquest, some of these disabilities are mentioned; but I doubt their genuineness. Though the law was such, the practice varied greatly. Under intolerant Caliphs, such as the orthodox Abbassides, the poor Christians were always

dynasties, it was, and still remains, the law of Islam. One must admire the rare tenacity of the subject faith, which, with but scanty light and hope, held its ground through weary ages of insult and depression, and still survives to see, as we now may hope, the dawning of a brighter day.

The East cut off from the West.

I have spoken of the loss of Syria as the dismemberment of a limb from the Byzantine empire. In one respect it was something more. For their own safety, the Romans dismantled a broad belt of country on the borders of the now barbarian Syria. The towns and fortresses were razed, and the inhabitants withdrawn. And so the neutral zone became a barrier against travel to and fro. For all ordinary communication, whether social, religious, or commercial, the road was closed. The East was severed from the West.

Silence of Byzantine historians.

'The abomination of desolation' wept over by Sophronius stood in the Holy Place. The cradle of Christianity, Zion the joy of the whole earth, was trodden under foot, and utterly cut off from the sight of its votaries. And all is told by the Byzantine writers in a few short lines. The pen of the Christian annalist might well refuse to write the story of cowardice and shame.

liable to have a fresh order issued to demolish all but their ancient churches, close the Christian schools, &c.

CHAPTER XXI.

RISING IN NORTHERN SYRIA.

A.H. XVII. A.D. 638.

Rising in Northern Syria.

IN the sixth year of Omar's Caliphate, a desperate effort was made by the Byzantine power, and at one moment not without some prospect of success, to shake off the Moslem yoke and recover possession of Northern Syria.

Romans by sea support attack of Mesopotamian Bedouins. A.H. XVII. A.D. 638.

The movement is attributed by tradition to an appeal from the Christian tribes of Mesopotamia, which when the Roman army retired into Asia Minor, besought the Emperor to save them from falling under his adversary's sway. Although the Moslem frontier on the side of Cilicia was tolerably secure, yet the seaboard to the west, and the desert border on the east of Syria, were both vulnerable. Most of the strongholds of Mesopotamia, it is true, had already fallen into the hands of Sád;[1] but the wandering Bedouins were not controlled by these, and with few exceptions the numerous Christian tribes still looked for support to the Persian or the Roman empires. The maritime power of the Romans was yet untouched. Cæsarea with its naval supports remained proof against landward attack; and the whole sea coast was kept unsettled by the hope, or by the fear, that the Roman fleet might at any time appear. The Emperor now promised the dwellers in Mesopotamia that he would second their efforts by way of the sea. An expedition was accordingly directed

[1] According to Caussin de Perceval, the strongholds along the Tigris, as well as the Euphrates—Tekrît, Hît, &c.—were only now reduced by the Arabs; but, according to the best traditions, these towns fell into the hands of the Moslems, shortly after the battle of Câdesîya.

from the port of Alexandria upon Antioch; while the Bedouins gathered in great hordes around Hims. Thus seriously threatened, Abu Obeida called in Khâlid from Kinnisrîn, and every garrison that could be spared from the south. But the enemy was still too strong to be dispersed by the force at his disposal, and so he sent an urgent summons for assistance to Medîna. Thereupon Omar ordered Sád to despatch a strong column from Kûfa under Cacâa for the relief of Hims without a day's delay; and likewise to effect a diversion by sending other columns against Rickka, Roha, Nisibîn, and such like strongholds in Upper Mesopotamia. Meanwhile the Romans landed from their ships. Antioch threw open her gates to them; and Kinnisrîn, Aleppo, and all the chief towns in the north, were in full revolt. Abu Obeida called a council of war; Khâlid was for giving battle, but he was alone in that view. Abu Obeida, feeling too weak to cope with the now combined forces of the Bedouins and Romans, retired within the walls of Hims, and, hemmed in by enemies, awaited the succour now advancing from Kûfa. So grave did Omar himself regard the crisis that, quitting Medîna for the second time, he journeyed to Jâbia, intending to march in person with the reinforcements northwards. But while on the journey, a change had already come over the scene. The vigorous movements in Mesopotamia so alarmed the Bedouins for the safety of their homes in the desert, that they began to forsake the Roman cause. Seeing now his opportunity, Abu Obeida issued from the fortress, and after a severe engagement routed the enemy, who fled in such confusion that, even before the arrival of Cacâa, they were totally dispersed. Omar returned from Jâbia to Medîna. He was delighted at the result; and he specially commended the alacrity of the Kûfa column:—'The Lord reward them,' he wrote to Sád, 'for their ready gathering and their speedy march to the succour of their beleaguered brethren.'[1]

Abu Obeida puts the Romans and Bedouins to flight.

[1] The story of this inroad and widespread rising is told by tradition with

Campaign in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor. A.H. XVII. A.D. 638.

It was the last effort of Constantinople to expel the invader from Syria, and the yoke plainly now was not to be shaken off. The expeditions undertaken for diverting the nomad insurgents had also the effect of reducing Mesopotamia to its uttermost limits. But not content with this, the infant faith, becoming conscious of its giant strength, began to stretch itself towards the north. The successes in Mesopotamia were followed up by a campaign in Asia Minor, under distinguished leaders; and the name of Iyâdh, the general-in-chief, under whom even Khâlid did not disdain to serve, begins to figure in the brief Byzantine record.[1] Nisibîn,[2] Amida, Harrân, Roha, and all the strong places lying along the northern frontier were taken or recaptured, and even Armenia was overrun.[3]

Christian tribes in Mesopotamia. The Beni Iyâdh.

Most of the Bedouin tribes in Mesopotamia embraced Islam. There were exceptions, and the story of the Beni Iyâdh is singular. They migrated to the north and found an asylum in Roman territory. But Omar, nettled at their disappearance, and fearing lest they should remain a thorn in his side, demanded their extradition from the Byzantine Court, on pain of the expulsion of all the Christian tribes living under his protection. And the Emperor, unwilling to expose these to ill-treatment, complied with the demand.[4]

the extremest brevity; but it is very evident that the position of Abu Obeida must, for some little time, have been very critical. Lebeau conjectures that the naval attack was led from Egypt by Constantine, the son of Heraclius; and M. Caussin de Perceval thinks that this is probable (vol. iii. p. 512).

[1] It seems almost certain that Khâlid did so serve, though there are other traditions to the effect that he never served under any other general than Abu Obeida. He may have led an independent expedition.

[2] Now Diâr Bekr.

[3] Byzantine historians tell us that the Roman governor of Edessa (Roha) concluded a treaty with Iyâdh, by which he bound himself to pay 100,000 pieces of gold, as black-mail, with the view of preserving his province from Saracen inroad, but that Heraclius disowned the humiliating condition, and deposed the governor. There is no hint of this in our Arabian authorities.

[4] Four thousand of the Beni Iyâdh were sent back in a body to Mesopotamia from Asia Minor, and resumed their allegiance to the Caliph, though continuing to profess the Christian faith. The remainder dispersed on the borders of the two kingdoms.

Beni Taghlib allowed to pay tithe.

Equally remarkable is the tale of the Beni Taghlib. They tendered their submission to Welîd ibn Ocba, who, solicitous for the adhesion to Islam of this great and famous race, pressed them with some rigour to abjure their ancient faith. Omar was much displeased at this,—'Leave them,' he wrote, 'in the profession of the Gospel. It is only within the bounds of the Peninsula, where are the Holy Places, that no polytheist tribe is permitted to remain.' Welîd was removed from his command; and it was enjoined on his successor to stipulate only that the usual tribute should be paid, that no member of the tribe should be hindered from embracing Islam, and that the children should not be educated in the Christian faith. The tribe, deeming in its pride the payment of 'tribute' (*jazia*) an indignity, sent a deputation to the Caliph:—They were willing, they said, to pay the tax if only it were levied under the same name as that taken from the Moslems. Omar evinced his liberality by allowing the concession; and so the Beni Taghlib enjoyed the singular privilege of being assessed as Christians at a 'double *Tithe*,' instead of paying *Jazia*, the obnoxious badge of subjugation.[1]

Fall of Cæsarea. A.H. XVII. A.D. 638.

The last place to hold out in Syria was Cæsarea. It fell at last in the fifth year of Omar's Caliphate. Amru had sat long before it. But, being open to the sea, and the battlements landward strong and well manned, it resisted all his efforts; and although Yezîd sent his brother Muâvia with reinforcements from Damascus, the siege was prolonged for several years. Sallies persistently made by the garrison, were driven back with equal constancy. In the end, as we

[1] That is, their tax was called *úshr* ('tenth'), the tithe paid by the believer, instead of *jazia*. It may be doubted whether the intolerant condition, forbidding the education of the children in Christian doctrine, was meant otherwise than as a nominal indication of the supremacy of Islam. It certainly was not enforced (if at all) with any rigour, for we read of this great tribe continuing in the profession of Christianity under the Omeyyad, and even under the Abbasside, dynastics. And in still later times they had their bishops at Ana, on the Euphrates. (See Caussin de Perceval, v. iii. p. 324.)

We now part with that invaluable author, whose history closes with this narrative.

are told, by the treachery of a Jew, a weak point was discovered in the defences. The city was carried by storm, with prodigious carnage of the wretched inhabitants. Four thousand prisoners, of either sex, were despatched as part of the prey to Medîna, and there distributed in slavery.[1]

Khâlid had again the misfortune to incur the displeasure of Omar. He came back from the campaign of Iyâdh greatly enriched with the spoils of war. In expectation of his bounty, many of his old friends from Irâc flocked to him on his return to his government at Kinnisrîn; and amongst these was Ashâth, chief of the Beni Kinda, to whom he gave the princely largess of one thousand pieces of gold. Again, at Amida in the east, Khâlid had indulged in the luxury of a bath mingled with wine, the odour whereof as he came forth still clung about him. On both charges he was now arraigned. About the second, there could be no question; the use of wine, even externally, was a forbidden thing, and Khâlid forswore the indulgence in it even thus. The other offence was graver in the Caliph's eyes. Either the gift was booty of the army; or, if Khâlid's own to give away, he was guilty, even on that supposition, of culpable extravagance. Whichever was the case, he deserved to be deposed from his command. In such terms a rescript was addressed to Abu Obeida, and sent by the hands of a courier charged to see that the command was fully carried out. Khâlid was to be accused

Khâlid brought to trial. A.H. XVII. A.D. 638–9.

[1] Nothing illustrates the vagueness of the Syrian narrative so forcibly as the uncertainty of the year in which Cæsarea fell. Byzantine historians make the siege last seven years, and place the fall in the year A.H. 19, that is, A.D. 640. Various traditions place it in every year between A.H. 14 and A.H. 20, and represent the siege as having lasted, some three, some four, some seven years.

A Jew is said to have betrayed the town by discovering to the Arabs an undefended aqueduct, through which they effected an entrance. The population was mixed; 70,000, we are told, were Greeks, fed (*murtazac*) from the public stores; 30,000 Samaritans; and 200,000 (?) Jews. It was a sad fate that of the captives. It is mentioned incidentally that two were made over to the daughters of Asâd ibn Zorâra, one of the twelve leaders, in place of two from Ain Tamar, who had died in their service. Multitudes of Greeks—men and women—must have pined miserably in a strange land and in hopeless

publicly; his helmet[1] taken off; his hands bound with his head-kerchief; and so arraigned he was to declare the truth.

Khâlid arraigned at Hims for malversation;

With Abu Obeida this was an ungracious task; for to the now degraded warrior he was beholden for all his victories in Syria. But the Caliph's word was law. And so he summoned Khâlid from his seat of government, proclaimed an assembly in the great Mosque of Hims, and, standing in the pulpit, placed Khâlid in the midst. Then the courier put his master's question—From whence the money given to Ashâth came? Khâlid, confounded at the unexpected charge, made no reply. Pressed by his friends, still he remained silent. Abu Obeida stood himself embarrassed, and a painful pause ensued. At last Bilâl, privileged as the Muedzzin of the Prophet, stepped forth, and with stentorian voice cried, '*Thus and thus hath the Commander of the Faithful said, and it is incumbent on us to obey;*' so saying, he unwound the kerchief from the head of Khâlid, bound his hands therewith, and took off his helmet. The great warrior, to whom Islam owed its conquests, stood as a felon before the congregation. Bilâl repeated the question, and Khâlid at length replied, 'The money was my own.' At once Bilâl unbound his hands, and, replacing the helmet on his head, wound the kerchief around it as before, and said, 'We honour thee still, even as we did honour thee before, one of our chiefest captains.' But Abu Obeida was silent; and Khâlid, stunned by the disgrace, stood speechless and bewildered. Abu Obeida had not the heart to tell him of his deposition; but, without sending him back to his seat of government, spoke kindly to him as to one who still had his confidence. Omar understood the delicacy of

servitude. And amongst these there must have been many women of gentle birth forced into menial office, or if young and fair to look upon, reserved for a worse fate—liable, when their masters were tired of them, to be sold into other hands. No wonder that Al Kindy, in his Apology, inveighs, with scathing denunciation, against the slavery practised in these Moslem crusades.

[1] *Calansua*, or helmet, worn by the captains of the Syrian army.

Abu Obeida's position, and himself summoned Khâlid to Medîna. Prompt to obey, though sore at heart, Khâlid first returned to Kinnisrîn; and both there and at Hims, bidding adieu to his friends and to the people, he complained openly and bitterly of the ingratitude of a prince who scrupled not to use him in his times of difficulty, but cast him aside when, through his aid, he had reached the summit of his power. Arrived at Medîna, he reproached the Caliph: 'I swear that thou hast treated despitefully a faithful servant to whom thou owest much; and I appeal from thee to the whole body of the Faithful.' 'Whence came that money?' was Omar's only answer. The question was repeated day by day; till at last, galled by the charge of unfaithfulness, Khâlid made answer thus: 'I have nought but the spoil which the Lord hath given me in the days of Abu Bekr, as well as in thine own. Whatever thou findest over 60,000 pieces, hath been gained in thy Caliphate; take it if thou wilt.' So his effects were valued, and the estimate reaching 80,000, Omar confiscated the difference. But he still affected to hold the great general in honour and regard. Accordingly, he sent a rescript to the various provinces, announcing that he had deposed Khâlid, not because of any tyranny or fraud, but because he deemed it needful to remove a stumbling-block out of the way of the people, who were tempted to put their trust in an arm of flesh, instead of looking alone to the Giver of all victory.

summoned to Medîna,

and there mulcted and deposed.

So closed the career of Khâlid. The first beginning of Omar's alienation was the affair of Mâlik ibn Noweira, followed by acts of tyranny in Irâc, which grated on his sense of clemency and justice. But these acts had long since been condoned; and therefore his conduct now was ungenerous and unjust. He used the 'Sword of God' so long as he had need of it, and when by it victory was secured, he cast it ungratefully away. Khâlid retired to Hims, and did not long survive. His manner of life when

Khâlid dies in neglect. A.H. XXI.

in the full tide of prosperity may be gathered from the brief notice that in the Plague (of which mention will soon be made) *forty* of his sons were carried off. The remainder of the family took refuge, like many others, in the desert. Soon after, in the eighth year of Omar's Caliphate, the great general died. In his last illness he kept showing the scars which thickly covered his body all over—marks of his bravery and unflinching prowess. 'And now,' he said, 'I die even as a coward dieth, or as the camel breatheth its last breath.' His end illustrates forcibly the instability of this world's fame and glory. The hero who had borne Islam aloft to the crest of victory and conquest, ended his days in penury and neglect.[1]

[1] Khâlid is no great favourite of Abbasside tradition. He belonged to a branch distant from that of the Prophet, which attached itself to the Omeyyads, of whom, in the struggle with Aly, Abdallah son of Khâlid was a staunch adherent.

The general outline of Khâlid's case is clear, though there is variety in the details. According to some accounts, Omar returned to him all the property he had confiscated. Others say that, when pressed to do so, he said, 'Nay, that be far from me. I am but the agent of the Moslems, and am bound to administer their property faithfully. I will never give it back.'

Tabari gives yet another account. Omar wrote to Abu Obeida commanding him to arraign Khâlid; but adding that if he would confess his guilt in the affair of Mâlik ibn Noweira, he would pardon him and restore him to his Government. Khâlid repaired for counsel to his sister Fâtima, then with her husband in Syria. She dissuaded him from confessing; for if he did so, it would only give Omar—who was determined on his ruin—a handle to depose him with disgrace. He bent down, and, kissing her forehead, said: 'It is the truth, my sister.' So he returned to Abu Obeida, and refused to make any confession. Thereupon Bilâl, as in the text, stripped off his kerchief, and so on, as in the text. At the conclusion of the trial Abu Obeida, by order of the Caliph, confiscated half of his property, even to his sandals—taking one and leaving the other.

CHAPTER XXII.

EXPULSION OF JEWS AND CHRISTIANS FROM ARABIA. THE CIVIL LIST OF OMAR. SLAVES OF ARAB BLOOD MADE FREE.

A.H. XIV., XV. A.D. 635, 636.

Domestic events. A.H. XIV., XV.

I MUST now revert to one or two matters of domestic interest, which, not to break the story of external conquest, I have refrained from noticing before.

Expulsion of Jews and Christians from Arabia.

Arabia, as the nursery of the legions destined to wage the wars of Islam, must be purged of strange religions. And accordingly, so soon as victory was secured in Syria and Irâc, Omar proceeded to signalise his reign by an act of harshness, if not of questionable equity.

Christians removed from Najrân,

In the centre of Arabia lies the province of Najrân, inhabited from of old by a Christian people. Mahomet had concluded a treaty with their chiefs and bishops, by which the annual tribute of 2,000 suits of raiment secured them safety in the undisturbed profession of their ancestral faith. Throughout the rebellion they remained loyal to their engagements, and Abu Bekr renewed the treaty. Worthy descendants of a martyr race, they resisted the blandishments of Islam; and as a penalty they must now quit their native soil, consecrated, in the persecution of Dzu Nowâs, by the ashes of their forefathers.[1] They were ordered to depart and receive lands in exchange elsewhere. Some migrated to Syria; but the greater part settled in the vicinity of Kûfa, where the colony of Najrânia long maintained the memory

[1] For an account of the persecution and martyrdom, avenged by the invasion of the Abyssinian Negus, see *Life of Mahomet*, vol. i. p. clxii. For the treaty of Mahomet, vol. iii. p. 299 (second edition, p. 158).

of Mahometan intolerance. The rights, however, conferred upon them by the Prophet's treaty, so far as their expatriation might admit, were respected by successive rulers; and their tribute, with decreasing numbers, lightened sensibly from time to time. After their removal, no long time elapsed before the Jews of Kheibar, a rich vale two or three days' journey north of Medîna, met a similar fate. Their claim was not so strong as the Christians'; for, conquered by Mahomet, they had been left on sufferance in possession of their fields at a rent of half the produce. In return for this partial right from which they now were ousted, they received a money payment, and then departed for Syria. Various pretexts are urged for the expatriation in either case. But behind them all we find the dogma—supposed dying behest of Mahomet—*In Arabia there shall be but one religion.* The recruiting field of Islam must be sacred ground.[1]

and Jews from Kheibar.

[1] The expulsion of the Jews is ordinarily assigned to the twentieth year of the Hegira; that of the Christians took place earlier. For the conquest of Kheibar, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. 395; and for the death-bed saying of the Prophet, *ibid.* p. 503. That the Peninsula should be wholly and exclusively Moslem was a sentiment so closely connected with the inspiration of Mahomet, when he declared in the Côran that he was 'sent a prophet to the Arabs,' and so forth, that it might well have recurred in the feverish delusions of his last illness. But whether or no, the utterance—whatever its purport—was evidently not taken at the time as an obligatory command. Had it been so, we may be sure that Abu Bekr would have made it his first concern to give effect to it, and no other reason would have been required to justify the act. As it is, various reasons are assigned for the expatriation of the Christians. First, we are told that they took usury greedily; next, that they fell to variance among themselves, and *asked* to be removed; lastly, that they were growing so strong that Omar became afraid of them. As regards the Jews, we are told that they were guilty of murder, and also that they attacked the Caliph's son.

The governors of the districts to which they emigrated had it in charge to treat them fairly. The Christians received special consideration, and the tale of raiment (which the heads of the community collected by yearly circuits among their people in Irâc and Syria) was reduced by successive Caliphs as the numbers of the tribe diminished by conversion to Islam or other cause.

Fadak, a dependency of Kheibar, was long a source of discontent to the descendants of Fâtima, who, as we have seen, claimed it for her patrimony; but Abu Bekr reserved it for the poor and the kinsmen of the Prophet (Beni Hâshim). Certain of the Omeyyad Caliphs took possession of it as their private

The Arabs as a nation share the spoils of war.

The Arabian nation was the champion of Islam; and to fight its battles every Arab was jealously reserved. He must be the soldier, and nothing else. He might not settle down in any conquered province as cultivator of the soil; and for merchandise or other labour, a busy warlike life offered but little leisure. Neither was there any need. The Arabs lived on the fat of the conquered lands, and captive nations served them. Of the booty taken in war, four parts were distributed to the army in the field; the fifth was reserved for the State; and even that, after discharging public obligations, was shared among the Arabian people. In the reign of Abu Bekr this was a simple matter. But in the Caliphate of Omar the spoil of Syria and of Persia began in ever-increasing volume to pour into the treasury of Medîna, where it was distributed almost as soon as received. What was easy in small beginnings, by equal sharing or discretionary preference, became now a heavy task. And there began, also, to arise new sources of revenue in the land assessment and the poll tax of subject countries, which, after defraying civil and military charges, had to be accounted for to the Central Government;—the surplus being, like the royal Fifth, the patrimony of the Arab nation.

New rule of distribution by classes of merit.

At length, in the second or third year of his Caliphate, Omar determined that the distribution should be regulated on a fixed and systematic scale. The income of the Commonwealth was to be divided, as heretofore, amongst the Faithful as their heritage, but upon a rule of precedence befitting the military and theocratic groundwork of Islam. For this end three points only were considered: priority of conversion, affinity to the Prophet, and military service. The widows of Mahomet, 'Mothers of the Faithful,' took the precedence with an annual allowance of 10,000 pieces each;

property. It was repeatedly released to the claimants as an act of justice or of piety (notably by Omar II., the pietist of the Dynasty); but it was always soon resumed again.

and all his kinsmen were with a corresponding liberality provided for.[1] The famous Three Hundred of Bedr had 5,000 each; presence at Hodeibia and the *Pledge of the Tree*[2] gave a claim to 4,000; such as took part in quelling the Rebellion had 3,000; and those engaged in the great battles of Syria and Irâc, as well as sons of the men of Bedr, 2,000; those taking the field after the actions of Câdesîya and the Yermûk, 1,000. Warriors of distinction received an extra grant of 500. And so they graduated downwards to 200 pieces for the latest levies. Nor were the households forgotten. Women had, as a rule, one-tenth of a man's share. Wives, widows, and children had each their proper stipend; and in the register, every infant, as soon as born, had the title to be entered with a minimum allowance of ten pieces, rising with advancing age to its proper place. Even Arab slaves (so long as any of that race remained) had, strange to say, their portion.

All other nations a lower class.

Thus every soul was rated at its worth. But the privilege was confined most strictly to those of Arab blood. A few exceptions, indeed, were made of distinguished Persian chiefs; but the mention of them only proves the stringency of the general rule.[3] The whole nation, every man, woman, and child of the militant Arab race, was subsidised. In theory, the rights of all believers were the same. 'Ye are one brotherhood,' said Mahomet at the Farewell pilgrimage;

[1] For example, the grandsons of the Prophet got 5,000 pieces each, like the men of Bedr. As to Abbâs, his uncle, some say he was rated at 5,000 pieces, others 7,000, and some again as high as 12,000 or even 24,000; but these last figures are evidently a pandering of tradition to glorify Abbâs and exalt the Abbasside dynasty under courtly influence. Abbâs was of course respected in the time of Omar as the Prophet's uncle; but he never took any leading part at the Caliph's court; and indeed his antecedents, during the life of Mahomet, were not much to his credit. See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 417. Ayesha was allotted 2,000 pieces extra 'for the love the Prophet bare to her;' but according to some, she declined to take it. The slave-concubines (Safia and Juweiria) were at first rated at 6,000, but at the solicitation of the other widows they were placed on an equality with them.

[2] For these see *ibid.* pp. 368, 371, chap. xix.

[3] Thus certain of the Dihcâns, or Persian Talookdars, who threw in their lot with the invading army, had a high rank, with the title to 1,000 pieces, conferred upon them.

and as he spake he placed two fingers of one hand upon his other hand, to enforce the absolute equality.[1] But in point of fact, the equality was limited to the Arab nation. The right of any brother of alien race was a dole of food sufficient for subsistence, and no more.[2]

Principle adopted by Omar disarms Arabian jealousies.

A great nation dividing thus amongst them their whole revenues, spoil, and conquests, first on the principle of equal brotherhood, and next on that of martial merit and spiritual distinction, is a spectacle probably without parallel in the world. The rule itself was well conceived. In no other way would it have been possible to reconcile the jealous susceptibilities of tribal rivalry.[3] Safwân, Soheil, and other great chiefs of the Coreish, who fell into a lower class because they had not joined the Prophet till after the capture of Mecca, refused at first any allowance but the highest: 'We know of none nobler than ourselves,' they said; 'and less than any other we will not take.' 'Not so,' answered Omar; 'I give it by priority of faith, and not for noble birth.' 'It is well,' they replied; and no reason but this, unanswerable because already axiomatic among the Moslems, would have satisfied them. Apart from tribal jealousy, there were two other sources of danger: first, the rivalry between the Bedouin tribes, on the one hand, and the 'Companions,' or men of Mecca and Medîna, on the other; and, second, between the Beni Hâshim (the Prophet's family), the Omeyyads, and the Coreish at large;—jealousies which by-and-by developed into large proportions, and threatened the very existence of the Caliphate; but which, held in cheek by the strong arm of Omar, were

[1] See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 486.

[2] The dole was fixed, after a trial of what was sufficient as a monthly ration, for the support of sixty poor persons. Two jaribs of grain, accordingly, was the portion appointed, as a minimum, to which every indigent believer of whatever race was entitled.

[3] The jealous susceptibilities of the rival tribes were continually breaking forth; as for example, in the election of a Muedzzin in place of the one killed at Câdesîya to proclaim the times of prayer to the army, on which a free fight arose that nearly ended in bloodshed.

now for a time avoided by assuming a spiritual test as the main ground of precedence.

Omar perpetuates military organisation of Arabs.

The Arabian aristocracy thus created was recognised by the whole Moslem world. The rank and stipend now assigned descended in the direct line of birth. Even rewards given for special gallantry in the field were heritable.[1] By making thus the revenues of Islam the heritage of the nation militant, their martial genius was maintained, and their employment perpetuated as the standing army of the Caliphate. The ennobled nation, pampered by indulgence, factious and turbulent when idle, were indeed too often a serious element of sedition and intrigue. But they were nevertheless the backbone of Islam, the secret of its conquests, and the stay of the Caliphate. The crowded harems multiplied the race with marvellous rapidity; and the progeny were, by Omar's organisation, kept sedulously distinct, so as never to mingle with the conquered races. Wherever they went they formed a class distinct and dominant—the nobles and rulers of the land. The subject peoples, even if they embraced Islam, were of a lower caste; and as clients of some Arab chief or tribe, courted their patronage and protection. Thus the fighting nation was set apart for the sacred task of subjugating nations and of propagating Islam; and even after the new-born zeal of the Faith had to some extent evaporated, the martial fire of the Arabs as a whole and undivided people was, owing mainly to Omar's foresight, kept alive in full activity for two centuries and a half. The nation was, and continued, an army mobilised; the cantonment, not the city, their home; their business, war and the camp;—a people whose hereditary calling it was to be ready to march on warlike expeditions at a moment's notice.

Register of all Arabs entitled to a stipend.

To carry out this vast design, a Register had to be drawn and kept up of every man, woman, and child, entitled to a stipend from the State—in other words, of the whole Arab

[1] Belâdzori, p. 458.

race employed in the interests of Islam. This was easy enough for the higher grades, but a herculean task for the hundreds of thousands of ordinary fighting men and their families who kept streaming forth from the Peninsula; and who, by the extravagant indulgence of polygamy, were multiplying rapidly. But the task was simplified by the strictly tribal composition and disposition of the forces. Men of a tribe, or branch of a tribe, fought together; and the several corps and brigades being thus territorially arranged in clans, the Register assumed the same form. Every soul was entered under the stock and tribe and clan whose lineage it claimed. And to this exhaustive classification we owe in great measure the elaborate genealogies and tribal traditions of Arabia before Islam.

The Register itself, as well as the office for its maintenance and for pensionary account, was called the DEWÂN or Department of the Exchequer. The State had by this time, as we have seen, an income swollen by the tribute of conquered cities, the poll-tax of subjugated peoples, the land and other regular assessments, the spoil of war, and the tithes. The first charge was for the revenue and civil administration; the next for military requirements, which began soon to assume a sustained and permanent form; the surplus remained (as has been now set forth) for pensionary and eleemosynary distribution. The whole revenues of Islam were thus expended as soon, almost, as received; and Omar took a special pride in seeing the treasury, in accord with this principle, emptied to the last dirhem.[1] The accounts of the various provinces were at the first kept by natives of the

The *Dewân* of Omar.

[1] Omar gave out that if the revenues sufficiently increased, he intended to advance the stipend of every man in the upper grades to 4,000 dirhems. It is said also that he contemplated the issue of a sumptuary ordinance both for Syria and Irâc, by which 1,000 dirhems were to be considered the allowance for the support of the stipendiary's family, 1,000 for his personal expenses, 1,000 for house and furnishings, and the remainder for hospitable entertainment; but that he died before he could issue the order. The object of such a rule, and the practicability of giving effect to it, are however doubtful.

country in the character to which they were accustomed—in Syria by Greeks, and in Irâc by Persians. At Kûfa the use of Pehlevi was maintained till the time of Hajjâj, when, an Arab assistant having learned the art from the chief treasurer, the Arabic system of record and notation was introduced.

Vast extent of Arab exodus.

We are not told the numerical result of the Dewân of Omar, but the population of Kûfa and Bussora may give us a standard to judge of the vast exodus in progress from Arabia, and the rapid strides by which the crowded harems multiplied the race. Arab ladies, as a rule, married only Arab husbands; but the other sex, besides unlimited indulgence in servile concubinage, were free to contract marriage with the women of conquered lands, whether converts or 'people of the Book;' for marriage is lawful between a Moslem and females of the Jewish and Christian faith. And although the wives of Arab blood took precedence in virtue of rank and birth, the children also of every Arab father, whether the mother were slave or free, Moslem, Jew, or Christian, were equal in legitimacy. And so the nation multiplied. Looking to these considerations and to the new drain upon Arabia to meet the conquests in Egypt and Persia (of which anon), we shall not greatly err if we assume that before Omar's death the number of Arabs beyond the limits of Arabia proper, reached to Half a million, and eventually doubled, perhaps quadrupled.

Provincial administration.

Civil administration followed in the wake of conquest. In Chaldæa, the great network of canals was early taken in hand. The long-neglected embankments of the Euphrates were placed under charge of a special officer, and those of the Tigris under another. Syria and Irâc were measured field by field; and the assessment of the lands, both crown and provincial, established on a uniform system. In Irâc, the agency of the Dihcâns, or great landholders, was taken advantage of, as under the Sassanide dynasty, to aid in the police and revenue administration.

In addition to the armies in the field, Omar arranged that a reserve of cavalry should be maintained at the head-quarters of the several provinces, in proportion to their resources, ready to be called out upon emergency. The corps at Kûfa numbered 4,000 lances, and there were eight such centres. Reserves for forage were also everywhere set apart; and the cost of these measures formed a first charge upon provincial revenue. Reserves of cavalry.

The various Suras and fragments of the Corân had by this time been compiled into a single volume. The 'collecting' of these was begun in the reign of Abu Bekr, at the suggestion of Omar, who was alarmed at the loss of so many of those, who had the Revelation by heart, in the battle of Yemâma. 'I fear,' he said to Abu Bekr, 'that slaughter may again wax hot amongst the Reciters of the Corân in other fields of battle, and that much may be lost of the divine text; now, therefore, give orders speedily for its collection.' The commission was given to Zeid ibn Thâbit, who, as the Prophet's amanuensis, had written down much of the revelation from the Prophet's lips. At first he scrupled to do what Mahomet himself had left undone. At last he accepted the task; and seeking out the Suras and scattered fragments and verses from every quarter, 'gathered them together from date leaves, shreds of leather and parchment, shoulder blades, tablets of white stone, and the breasts of men.' By the labours of Zeid, these confused materials were reduced to the comparative order and sequence in which we now find them; but in its obscurity and incoherence, the collection still bears traces in almost every page of the haphazard way in which the pieces, thus rudely dovetailed, were compiled. The original copy was committed to the custody of Haphsa, Omar's daughter, one of the Prophet's widows; and during Omar's Caliphate this exemplar continued to be the standard and authoritative text of the Corân.[1] Corân; how 'collected.'

[1] See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 555; and *The Corân: its Composition and Teaching*, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FAMINE AND PLAGUE.

A.H. XVIII. A.D. 639.

The *Year of Ashes.* A.H. XVIII. A.D. 639.

THE fifth year of Omar's Caliphate was darkened by the double calamity of pestilence and famine. It is called 'The Year of Ashes;' for the dry air of the Hejâz was so charged with the unslaked dust of the parched and sandy soil as to obscure the light by a thick and sultry haze.[1]

Famine in the Hejâz.

In the northern half of the Peninsula the drought was so severe that all nature languished. Wild and timid creatures of the desert, tamed by want, came seeking food at the hand of man. Flocks and herds died of starvation, or were so attenuated as to become unfit for human food. Markets were empty and deserted. The people suffered extremities like those of a garrison long besieged. Crowds of Bedouins, driven by hunger, flocked to Medîna and aggravated the distress. Omar, with characteristic self-denial, refused any indulgence which could not be shared with those around him. He took an oath that he would taste neither meat nor butter, nor even milk, until the people at large had food enough and to spare. On one occasion his servant obtained at a great price a skin filled with milk, and another with butter. Omar sent both away in alms. 'I will not eat,' he said, 'of that which costeth much; for how then should I know the trouble of my people, if I suffer not even as they?'

[1] This is the received derivation of the era called the *Year of Ashes*. Others call it so because the land was pulverised, dark and dusty, without a blade of grass or of any green thing.

From coarse fare and the use of oil-olive instead of milk and butter, the Caliph's countenance, naturally fresh and bright, became sallow and haggard.[1]

Grain imported from Syria and other lands.

Every effort was made to alleviate distress, and as the famine was limited to Arabia, or at any rate was sorest there, Omar sent letters to the various governors abroad, who promptly aided him in this extremity. Abu Obeida came himself with four thousand beasts of burden laden with corn from Syria, which he distributed with his own hand amongst the famished people. Amru despatched food from Palestine, both by camels and by shipping from the port of Ayla.[2] Supplies came also from Irâc. The beasts of burden were slain by twenties daily, and served, together with their freight, to feed the citizens of Medîna. After nine months of sore trial, the heavens were overcast, in answer (we are told) to a solemn service, in which Abbâs, the Prophet's aged uncle, took a part; the rain descended in heavy showers and drenched the land.[3] The grass sprang rapidly, the Bedouins were sent

[1] The secretary of Wâckidy has several pages filled with traditions about Omar's treatment of the famine, and self-denying solicitude for his people. He refused to ride a horse during the famine because it consumed corn. He chided his son for eating a cucumber, when men around were dying of hunger, and so forth. There may be much of exaggeration; but at the bottom of it all lies a fine trait in Omar's character.

[2] Ayla, on the Gulf of Acaba, at the head of the Red Sea.

[3] Here again the Kâtib Wâckidy gives a great array of traditions regarding Omar's prayers and the service for rain. Some of these which notice the part taken by Abbâs (but they are comparatively few in number) have been eagerly seized by the Abbassido annalists to glorify the patriarch, and through him the dynasty descended from him. The tale is cast in the supernatural type of the Prophet's life. A man finding a sheep which he had slaughtered to be nothing but mere skin and bone without a drop of blood, in his distress invokes Mahomet, who thereupon appears to him in a vision, assures him that he shares the distress of his people, and bids him tell Omar 'to call to mind that which he had forgotten.' A general assembly is summoned in the Great Mosque, and after much heart-searching as to what the Prophet meant by these words, they betake themselves to prayer. Omar seizes the hand of Abbâs, and for the sake of the Prophet's aged kinsman, beseeches the mercy of Heaven. Then Abbâs himself prays, and the people weep floods of tears. The heavens are suddenly overcast, and the rain descends. Thereupon Abbâs is saluted as 'the Waterer of the two Holy Places,' i.e. of Mecca and Medîna.

back to their pasture lands, and plenty again prevailed. Benefit accrued from the calamity, for a permanent traffic was established with the north; and the markets of the Hejâz continued long to be supplied from Syria, and eventually by sea from Egypt.[1]

Plague breaks out in Syria.

The famine was followed, but in a different region, by a still worse calamity. The plague broke out in Syria; and, attacking with special virulence the head-quarters of the Arabs at Hims and Damascus, devastated the whole province. Crossing the desert, it spread to Irâc, and even as far as Bussorah. Consternation pervaded all ranks. High and low fell equally before the scourge. Men were struck down as by a sudden blow, and death followed rapidly. Omar's first impulse was to summon Abu Obeida to his presence for a time, lest he too should fall a victim to the fell disease. Knowing the chivalrous spirit of his friend, the Caliph veiled his purpose, and simply ordered him to visit Medîna 'on an urgent affair.' But Abu Obeida divined the cause, and, choosing rather to share the danger with his people, begged to be excused. Omar, as he read the answer, burst into tears. 'Is Abu Obeida dead?' they asked. 'No, he is not dead,' said Omar; 'but it is as if he were.' The Caliph then set out himself on a journey towards Syria, but was met on the confines at Tebûk by Abu Obeida and other chief men from the scene of the disaster. A council was called, and Omar yielded to the wish of the majority that he should return home again. 'What,' cried some of his

Omar holds a council on the borders of Syria.

[1] We are told that Amru, to meet the famine, established a shipping service *between Egypt* and the ports of the Hejâz, that the trade in grain thus begun was permanently established, and that prices were thereafter little higher at Medîna than in Egypt. But Egypt was not conquered till two years later; and in the hostile state of the border preceding the conquest, it is impossible that a peaceful trade in corn could have sprung up. We must therefore conclude that tradition here anticipates that which occurred shortly after, when Omar reopened the communication from the Nile to Lake Timsa and Suez, and Egypt found a rich customer in the markets of Medîna and the Hejâz.

courtiers, 'and flee from the decree of God?' 'Yea,' replied the Caliph, wiser than they, 'we flee, but it is from the decree of God, unto the decree of God.' He then commanded Abu Obeida to carry the Arab population in a body from the infected cities into the high lands of the desert, and himself with his followers wended his way back to Medîna.[1]

Arabs of Syria moved to high lands of Haurân.

Acting on the Caliph's wish, Abu Obeida lost no time in leading forth the people to the high lands of the Haurân. He had reached as far as Jâbia, when just as he put his foot into the camel's stirrup to start again upon his onward journey, he too was struck, and together with his son fell a victim to the pestilence. Moâdz, whom he had designated to occupy his place, died almost immediately after; and it was left for Amru to conduct the panic-stricken multitude to the hill country, where the pestilence abated. Not less than five-and-twenty thousand perished in this visitation. Of a single family which migrated seventy in number from Medîna, but four were left. Such was the deadly virulence of the plague.

Death of Abu Obeida.

Omar's journey to Syria, Autumn, A.H. XVIII. A.D. 639.

The country was disabled by the scourge, and at one time fears were entertained of an attack from the Roman armies. It was fortunate for the Caliphate that no such attempt was made, for the Arabs would have been ill able just then to resist it. But the terrible extent of the calamity was manifested in another way. A vast amount of property was left by the dead, and the gaps at every turn amongst the survivors caused much embarrassment in the administration

[1] The council was held at Sargh, near Tebûk, on the confines of Syria. During the discussion Abd al Rahmân quoted a saying of Mahomet:—'If pestilence break out in a land, go not thither; if thou art there, flee not from it.' Omar's views were more reasonable, and he justified them by this illustration: 'Suppose that ye alight in a valley, whereof one side is green with pasture, and the other bare and barren, whichever side ye let loose your camels upon, it would be by the decree of God; but ye would choose the brow that was green.' And so he judged that in removing the people from the scene of danger into a healthier locality, he was making no attempt to flee from the decree of God.

and devolution of the same. The difficulty grew to such dimensions, that with the view of settling this and other matters Omar resolved on making a royal progress through his dominions. At first he thought of visiting Irâc, and passing through Mesopotomia, so to enter Syria from the north; but he abandoned the larger project, and confining his resolution to Syria, took the usual route.[1] His way lay through the Christian settlement of Ayla, at the head of the Gulf of Acaba. The reception met with here brings out well the simplicity of Omar, and his kindly feeling toward the Christians. He journeyed on a camel with small pomp or following; and as he was minded to enter the village unrecognised, he changed places with his servant. 'Where is the Ameer?' cried the eager crowds as they streamed forth from the village to witness the Caliph's advent. 'He is *before* you,' replied Omar, and he drove his camel on.[2] So they hurried forward, thinking that the great Caliph was beyond, and left Omar to alight unobserved at the house of the bishop, with whom he lodged during the heat of the day. His coat, which had been rent upon the journey, he gave to his host to mend. This the bishop not only did, but had a garment made for him of material lighter and more suited to the oppressive travel of the season. Omar, however, preferred to wear his own.

Proceeding onwards to Jâbia, the Caliph made a circuit

[1] He purposed to make a circuit of all the provinces subject to his sway. Aly, we are told, even recommended a second *hijra*, or transfer of the Caliph's court to Kûfa (evidently a proleptic tradition anticipatory of the move eventually made by Aly himself to that capital). What induced Omar to give up the project of visiting Irâc is not very clear. The ordinary story is that Kâb the Rabbin (a Jew from Himyar, converted about this time, who will be noticed more hereafter) dissuaded him from it: 'Of evil,' he said, 'the East hath nine parts, and of good but one; while the dwellings of Satan and every kind of plague are there. On the contrary, the West hath nine parts good, and but one of evil.' Thereupon, the tradition proceeds, Omar abandoned the idea of visiting Irâc.

[2] *Before*, having the double meaning of 'he is before you,' that is, in your presence; or (as they took it) 'in advance of you,' and farther on the road.

from thence over the whole of Syria. He visited all the Moslem settlements, and gave instructions for the disposal of the estates of the multitudes swept away by the plague, himself deciding such claims as were laid before him. As both Yezîd, the governor of Damascus, and Abu Obeida had perished in the pestilence, Omar now appointed Muâvia, son of Abu Sofiân and brother of Yezîd, to the chief command in Syria, and thus laid the foundation of the Omeyyad dynasty. Muâvia was a man of unbounded ambition, but wise and able withal; and he turned to good account his new position. The factious spirit which built itself up on the divine claim of Aly and Abbâs, the cousin and uncle of the Prophet, and spurned the Omeyyad blood of Muâvia, was yet in embryo. Aly, as well as Abbâs, had hitherto remained inactive at Medîna. The latter, always weak and wavering, was now enfeebled by age; the former, honoured, indeed, as well for his wit and judgment as for his relationship to Mahomet, was amongst the trusted counsellors of the Caliph, but possessed of no special power or influence, nor any apparent ambition beyond a quiet life of indulgence in the charms of a harem varied constantly with fresh arrivals. Neither is there any reason to suppose that at this time the former opposition to Islam of Abu Sofiân or of Hind, the parents of Muâvia, was remembered against them. Sins preceding conversion, if followed by a consistent profession of the Faith, left no stain upon the believer. It was not till the fires of civil strife burst forth that the ancient misdeeds of the Omeyyad race and their early enmity to the Prophet were dragged into light, and political capital made of them. The accession, therefore, of Muâvia at the present time to the chief command in Syria excited no jealousy or opposition. It passed, indeed, as a thing of course, without remark.[1]

Muâvia appointed to the chief command in Syria.

[1] Shorahbîl, who had the command of the province of the Jordan (Ordonna), was put aside as weak and unfitted for the office; or rather his government was apparently placed under that of Amru, who was in command of all the

Bilâl performs the office of Muedzzin.

As Omar prepared to take final leave of Syria, a scene occurred which stirred to their depths the hearts of all the Moslems present. It was the voice of Bilâl, the Muedzzin of the Prophet, proclaiming the hour of prayer. The stentorian call of the now aged African had never been heard since the death of Mahomet; for he had refused to perform the duty in the service of any other. He followed the army to Syria, and there, honoured for his former position, had retired into private life. The chief men now petitioned Omar that on this last occasion, Bilâl should be asked once more to perform the office of Muedzzin. The old man consented, and as the well-known voice arose clear and loud with the accustomed cry, the people recalled so vividly the Prophet at the daily prayers to mind, that the whole assembly was melted to tears, and strong warriors, with Omar at their head, lifted up their voices and sobbed aloud. Bilâl died two years after, at Damascus.[1]

Pilgrimage to Mecca, A.H. XVIII. November, A.D. 639.

Omar returned to Medîna in time to set out on the annual Pilgrimage to Mecca, at which he presided every year of his Caliphate. But this was the last journey which he took beyond the limits of Arabia.

Holy Land. The appointment of Muâvia as the brother of Yezîd, the late governor of Damascus, was in every way natural and expected.

[1] For Bilâl and his office of Muedzzin, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. 204.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONQUEST OF EGYPT.

A.H. XX. A.D. 641.

THE year following the plague and drought was one of comparative repose. The arms of Islam were now pushing their way steadily into Persia. But I must reserve the advance in that direction, and first narrate the conquest of Egypt. A.H. XIX. A.D. 641.

The project is due to Amru. After the fall of Cæsarea, he chafed at a life of inaction in Palestine, which was now completely pacified. All around he looked for the ground of some new conquest. When the Caliph last visited Syria, he sought permission to make a descent upon Egypt, as every way desirable; for, to gain hold of a land that was at once weak and wealthy, would enfeeble the power of the enemy, and, by an easy stroke, augment their own. The advice was good; for Egypt, once the granary of Rome, now fed Constantinople with corn. Alexandria, though inhabited largely by natives of the country, drew its population from every quarter. It was the second city in the Byzantine empire, the seat of commerce, luxury, and letters. Romans and Greeks, Arabs and Copts, Christians, Jews, and Gentiles mingled here on common ground. But the life was essentially Byzantine. The vast population was provided in unexampled profusion and magnificence with theatres, baths, and places of amusement. A forest of ships, guarded by the ancient Pharos, ever congregated in its safe and spacious harbour, from whence communication was maintained with Amru casts an eye on Egypt.

all the seaports of the empire. And Alexandria was thus a European, rather than an Egyptian, city.[1]

The land of Egypt disaffected towards Byzantine rule.

It was far otherwise with the rich valley irrigated by the Nile. Emerging from the environs of the luxurious city, the traveller dropped at once from the pinnacle of civilisation to the very depths of poverty and squalor. Egypt was then, as ever, the servant of nations. The overflowing produce of its well-watered fields was swept off by the tax-gatherers to feed the great cities of the empire. And the people of the soil, ground down by oppression, were always ready to rise in insurrection. They bore the foreign yoke uneasily. Hatred was embittered here, as in other lands, by the never-ceasing endeavour of the Court to convert the inhabitants to orthodoxy, while the Copts held tenaciously by the Monophysite creed. Thus chronic disaffection pervaded the land, and the people courted deliverance from Byzantine rule. There were here, it is true, no Bedouin tribes, or Arabian sympathies, as in the provinces of Syria. But elements of even greater weakness had long been undermining the Roman power in Egypt.

Amru invades Egypt, A.H. XIX., XX. A.D. 640, 641.

It was in the nineteenth or twentieth year of the Hegira that Amru, having obtained the hesitating consent of the Caliph, set out from Palestine for Egypt. His army, though joined on its march by bands of Bedouins lured by the hope of plunder, did not at the first exceed four thousand men. Soon after he had left, Omar, concerned at the smallness of his force, would have recalled him; but finding that he had already gone too far to be stopped, he sent heavy reinforcements, under Zobeir, one of the chief Companions, after him. The army of Amru was thus swelled to an imposing array of

[1] The male population alone, we are told, numbered 600,000. There were 70,000 (according to others 40,000) male Jews of an age to pay the poll tax, and 200,000 Greeks, of whom 30,000 effected their escape by sea before the siege. The baths were 4,000 in number, the theatres 400, and the harbour held 12,000 vessels of various size.

from twelve to sixteen thousand men, some of them warriors of renown.[1]

And reduces Misr and Upper Egypt.

Amru entered Egypt by Arîsh, and overcoming the garrison at Faroma, turned to the left and so passed onward through the desert, reaching thus the easternmost of the seven estuaries of the Nile. Along this branch of the river he marched by Bubastis towards Upper Egypt, where Mucoucus, the Copt, was governor—the same, we are told, who sent Mary the Egyptian bond-maid as a gift to Mahomet.[2] On the way he routed several columns sent forth to arrest the inroad; and amongst these a force commanded by his Syrian antagonist Artabûn, who was slain upon the field of battle. Marching thus along the vale of the Nile, with channels fed from the swelling river, verdant fields, and groves of the fig tree and acacia, Khâlid, now reinforced by Zobeir, reached at last the obelisks and ruined temples of Ain Shems, or Heliopolis, near to the great city of Misr.[3] There the Catholicos or bishop procured for Mucoucus a truce of four days. At its close, an action took place in

[1] The narrative is almost more fugitive, and the chronology less certain, than in the case of Syria. The expedition is variously placed at from A.H. XVI. to XXV. The earlier date is due probably to the notion (before explained) that Amru assisted Medîna with corn in the year of famine; the later date, to the attempt of the Greeks to retake Alexandria, A.H. 25. The best authenticated date is that which I have followed. The received account is this. Amru obtained permission for the campaign from Omar at Jâbia, probably on his last visit to Syria. When the Caliph returned to Medîna and reflected on the seriousness of the enterprise, he repented of having allowed Amru to go on with so small a force, and sent orders that if he had not already entered Egypt, he was to return. Warned probably of its purport, Amru did not open the packet till he had crossed the boundary; and so he went forward. When Omar was informed of this he sent Zobeir with 12,000 men to reinforce him. Other accounts say that Amru's entire force consisted of 12,000 men, despatched from Palestine and Medîna, in three bodies, one after another. Some stories are told, but they look apocryphal, of Amru having visited Alexandria, before his conversion, many years previously.

[2] For the communications of this Mucoucus with Mahomet see *Life*, pp. 385 and 440.

[3] Memphis, in the vicinity of modern Cairo. The advance was probably made by Salahiya up the Pelusian branch of the Nile, to the north of Ismailia and Wolseley's recent line of march.

which the Egyptians were driven back into their city and there besieged. The opposition must at one time have been warm, for the Yemen troops gave way. Reproached by Amru for their cowardice, one of these replied, 'We are but men, not made of iron or stone.' 'Be quiet, thou yelping dog!' cried Amru. 'If we are dogs,' answered the angry Arab, 'then what art thou but the commander of dogs?' Amru made no reply, but called on a column of veterans to step forth; and before their fiery onset the Egyptians fled. But, however bravely the native army may have fought at first, there was not much heart in their resistance. 'What chance,' said the Copts one to another, 'have we against men that have beaten the Chosroes and the Kaiser?' And, in truth, they deemed it little loss to be rid of the Byzantine yoke. The siege was of no long duration. A general assault was made, and Zobeir, with desperate valour, had already scaled the walls, and the place was at the mercy of the Arabs, when a deputation from Mucoucus obtained terms from Amru. A capitation tax was fixed of two dinars on every male adult, with other impositions similar to those of Syria. Many prisoners had already been taken; and a fifth part of their number, and of the spoil, was sent to Medîna. The same conditions were given to the Greek and Nubian settlers in Upper Egypt. But the Greeks, fallen now to the level of those over whom they used to domineer, and hated by them, were glad to make their escape to the sea coast.[1]

Alexandria, besieged,

Amru lost no time in marching upon Alexandria, so as to reach it before the Greek troops, hastily called in from

[1] Later historians (whose accounts, however, bear the mark of being apocryphal) represent the Moslem army as at one time in considerable peril, surrounded and hemmed in at Heliopolis by the rising waters of the Nile. Mucoucus having retired to an island on the farther side of the Nile, broke up the bridge across it. Deputations were then sent by boat to and fro; and the Mussulman envoys delivered speeches before Mucoucus, exhorting and threatening the governor, much in the style of those recited at the Persian Court before the battle of Câdesîya. Mucoucus, who is represented as favourable to Islam, at last entered into terms with the invaders.

the outlying garrisons, could rally there for its defence. On the way he put to flight several columns which sought to hinder his advance; and at last presented himself before the walls of the great city, which, offering (as it still does) on the land side a narrow and well-fortified front, was capable of an obstinate resistance. Towards the sea also it was open to succour at the pleasure of the Byzantine Court. But during the siege, Heraclius died, and the opportunity of relief was supinely allowed to slip away.[1] Some of the protective outworks on the narrow isthmus were taken by storm; and there appearing no prospect of support from Constantinople, the spirit of the garrison began to flag. The Greeks took to their ships, and in great numbers pusillanimously deserted the beleaguered city. At last Mucoucus, who after his defeat had retired to Alexandria, finding the place too weak for a prolonged defence, offered to capitulate, on the same terms as were given to Upper Egypt, and on condition that the prisoners taken throughout the campaign were set free. The Caliph, being referred to, readily agreed. 'Tribute,' he replied, 'is better than booty; for it continueth, whereas spoil soon vanisheth as if it had not been. Touching the captives, such as are already scattered, are beyond my power; but those that remain, saving such as were seized on the field of battle, shall be restored.' And so the city escaped sack, and the people became tributary to the conquerors.[2]

capitulates A.H. XX. A.D. 641.

Amru, it is said, wished to fix his seat of government at Alexandria, but Omar would not allow him to remain so far away from his camp, with so many branches of the Nile between. So he returned to Upper Egypt. A body of the Arabs crossed the Nile and settled in Ghîzeh, on the western

Amru founds *Fostât*, or Cairo.

[1] Heraclius died in February, A.D. 641.

[2] The tale of Amru being taken prisoner in an attack on the outworks is not mentioned by any early authority, and seems to possess no foundation. The story is, that when carried before the authorities, his freedman, who had been captured with him, slapped Amru on the face, and so deceived the Greeks into the belief that he was a common soldier who might be set at liberty.

themselves with the rude repast. Next day he commanded a sumptuous banquet to be set before them, with all the dainties of the Egyptian table; and here again the warriors fell to with equal zest. On the third day there was a grand parade of all the troops in battle array, and the people flocked to see it. Then Amru addressed them, saying: 'The first day's entertainment was to let you see the plain and simple manner of our life at home; the second to show you that we can, not the less, enjoy the good things of the lands we enter; and yet retain, as ye see in the spectacle here before you, our martial vigour notwithstanding.' Amru gained his end; for the Copts retired saying one to the other, 'See ye not that the Arabs have but to raise their heel upon us, and it is enough!' Omar was delighted at his lieutenant's device, and said of him, 'Of a truth it is on wisdom and resolve, as well as on mere force, that the success of warfare doth depend.'

Fable of a maiden sacrifice and Omar's rescript.

A curious tale is told of the rising of the Nile and of Omar's rescript in reference to the same. The yearly flood was long delayed; and, according to wont, the Copts desired to cast into the river a maiden beautifully attired. When asked what course should be pursued to meet their wish, the Caliph indited this singular letter, and inclosed it in a despatch to Amru:—

'The Commander of the Faithful to the River Nile, greeting. If in times past thou hast risen of thine own will, then stay thy flood; but if by the will of Almighty God, then to Him we pray that thy waters may rise and overspread the land. 'OMAR.'

'Cast this letter,' wrote the Caliph, 'into the stream, and it is enough.' It was done, and the fertilising tide began to rise abundantly.[1]

[1] This tale (which is not given by our earliest authorities) is, no doubt, based upon a custom of the Egyptians, who, as we learn from Lane, cast, year by year, the effigy of a maiden, decked in bridal attire, into the river, calling it 'the Bride of the Nile.' But whether the tale be real or fictitious, the sen-

Alexandria retaken, besieged, and finally reoccupied by Moslems. A.H. XXV. A.D. 646.

The seaboard of Africa lay open to the naval power of the Byzantine empire; but for a time, it was little used against the Saracens. Amru, with the restless spirit of his faith, soon pushed his conquests westward beyond the limits of Egypt, established himself in Barca, and reached even to Tripoli.[1] The subject races in these quarters rendered their tribute in a fixed quota of African slaves, thus early legalising in that unhappy land the iniquitous traffic which has ever since prevailed in human flesh and blood. The maritime settlements and native tribes thus ravaged, received little or no aid from the Byzantine fleets. But early in the Caliphate of Othmân, a desperate attempt was made to regain possession of Alexandria. The Moslems, busy with their conquests elsewhere, had left the city insufficiently protected. The Greek inhabitants conspired with the Court; and a fleet of three hundred ships was sent under command of Manuel, who drove out the garrison and took possession of the city. Amru hastened to its rescue. A great battle was fought outside the walls: the Greeks were defeated, and the unhappy town was subjected to the miseries of a second and a longer siege. It was at last taken by storm and given up to plunder. To obviate the possibility of another similar mishap, Amru razed the fortifications, and quartered in the vicinity a strong garrison, which, every six months, was relieved from Upper Egypt. The city, though still maintaining its commercial import, fell now from its high estate. The pomp and circumstance of the Moslem Court were transferred to Fostât, and Alexandria ceased to be the capital of Egypt.[2]

timent conveyed in it is indicative of that virtue in the Moslem faith which carries the special providence of God into the life of every day.

[1] Amru is said to have been so pleased with Barca as to declare that if he had not possessed a property and home in the Hejâz, he would have settled there.

[2] The circumstances of the siege (a strange contrast to the bombardment, which recently crowded the horrors of months into so many hours) are narrated with the utmost brevity; and indeed tradition very much confuses the second

siege with the first. Eutychius speaks of the investment of the city by the Arabs lasting fourteen months. He also tells us that George the Patriarch fled to Constantinople, and that for ninety-seven years there was no Melchite patriarch for Egypt. A Maronite patriarch seems to have succeeded.

I should mention that by later and less reliable authorities a long correspondence is given as having passed between Amru and Omar, in which the latter upbraids his lieutenant for not remitting 'as large a revenue as that which Egypt yielded to the Pharaohs.' Amru resented the imputation; whereupon Omar sent his legate, Mohammed ibn Maslama, to set on foot an investigation into the revenues of the country; and also superseded Amru in the government of Upper Egypt by Abdallah Ibn Abu Sarh. The correspondence (though accepted by Weil) appears to me altogether apocryphal. It was contrary to Omar's character to write in the harsh and unreasonable tone of these letters, or to press his governors for funds at the expense of the provinces which they administered. Nor did he stand in any urgent need of the additional revenue, as these letters would imply; for the treasures of the world were flowing at this time in a full tide into Medîna. As to Ibn Abu Sarh, he did not supersede Amru till the reign of his foster-brother Othmân.

CHAPTER XXV.

ADVANCE ON THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF PERSIA—HORMUZAN TAKEN PRISONER.

A.H. XVI.—XX. A.D. 637–641.

Barrier laid down by Omar towards the East.

TURNING once more to the eastern provinces of the Caliphate, we find the cautious policy of Omar still tending to restrain the Moslem arms within the limits of Irâc-Araby; that is, within the country bounded by the western slopes of the great range which separates Chaldæa from Persia proper. But they were soon, by the force of events, to burst the barrier.

Situation in Lower Irâc.

To the north of Medâin, the border land of Moslem territory was securely defended by Holwân and other strongholds, already mentioned as planted along the hilly range. In Lower Irâc, Otba, as we have seen, had, after repeated encounters, established himself at Bussorah, from whence he held securely the country at the head of the Gulf.[1] But the Persian satraps, though keeping at a safe distance aloof, were still in strength at Ahwâz and Râm Hormuz within a hundred miles of him.

The Governor of Bahrein attacks Persepolis. A.H. XVI. A.D. 637.

Hostilities in this direction were precipitated by a rash and unsuccessful raid, from the opposite coast, upon Istakhr or Persepolis.[2] Alâ, Governor of Bahrein, who had distinguished himself in crushing the rebellion along the southern

[1] The earlier operations of Otba have been narrated above, p. 91.

[2] The ancient capital of Khuzistan, where extensive ruins and colonnades still mark the extent and magnificence of this once regal city. Weil doubts whether the expedition reached so far as Persepolis. But I can only follow our authorities, who certainly represent Alâ as advancing to its vicinity.—Weil, vol. ii. p. 87.

shore of the Persian Gulf, looked on with jealous eye at the conquests made in Irâc by Sâd. Tempted by the closeness of the Persian shore, he set on foot an expedition to cross the narrow sea, and seize the district which lay opposite. This was done, not only without the permission of Omar, but against his known unwillingness to trust the treacherous element.[1] Success might have justified the project; but it fell out otherwise. The troops embarked with alacrity; and landing (it may have been) at Bushire, met for a time with no check in their advance upon Persepolis. But before long they were drawn into a trap. Advancing confidently with their whole force in three columns, they had neglected to secure their base; and the Persians, coming behind, cut them off altogether from their ships. The Moslems, after a severe engagement, in which the leaders of two of the columns fell, were unable to disperse the gathering enemy; and, turning as a last resource towards Bussorah, found the road in that direction also barred. Messengers were hurried to Medîna, and Omar, highly incensed with Alâ for his foolhardiness, despatched an urgent summons to Otba to relieve from Bussorah the beleaguered army. A force of 12,000 men set out immediately; and forming, not without difficulty, a junction with Alâ, beat back the Persians, and then retired on Bussorah. The troops of Otba gained a great name in this affair, and the special thanks of Omar.

Meets with a check, but is relieved from Bussorah.

But the retreat, conducted with whatever skill and bravery, put heart into the hostile border. Hormuzân, a Persian satrap, escaping from the field of Câdesîya, had retired to his own province of Ahwâz, on the lower mountain range, at no great distance from Bussorah. He began now to make raids upon the Moslem outposts, and Otba resolved to attack him. Reinforcements were obtained from Kûfa, and Otba was also fortunate enough to gain over a strong Bedouin

Campaign in Khuzistan. A.H. XVII. A.D. 638.

[1] Omar, as we shall see farther on, had an unconquerable dread of committing his troops to the sea.

tribe, which, though long settled in the plain below Ahwâz, was by blood and sympathy allied to the Arab garrison of Bussorah. Thus strengthened, he dislodged the enemy from Ahwâz, and drove him across the Karoon river. A truce was called; and Ahwâz, having been ceded to the Moslems, was placed by Otba in the hands of his Bedouin allies.[1] A dispute as to their boundary, however, shortly after arose between the Bedouins and Hormuzân; and the latter, dissatisfied with the Moslem decision, again raised his hostile standard. He was put to flight by Horcûs, a 'Companion' of some distinction, who reduced the rebellious province, and sought permission to follow up his victories by a farther advance. But Omar, withholding permission, bade him occupy himself in restoring the irrigation works, and resuscitating the deserted fields, of Khuzistan. Hormuzân fled to Râm Hormuz, farther east, and was, for the second time, admitted to an amnesty.

A.H. XVIII. A.D. 639.

Not long after, tidings reached Horcûs, that emissaries from Yezdegird at Merve were stirring up the people to fresh opposition. The attitude of Hormuzân became once more doubtful; and the Caliph, suspecting now a serious combination, assembled a powerful army from Kûfa and Bussora, and gave the command to Nómân ibn Mocarrin.[2] Hormuzân, with a great Persian following, was again routed, and, having abandoned Râm Hormuz to the Arabs, fled to Tostar,[3] fifty miles north of Ahwâz. This stronghold was obstinately defended by the Persians, who rallied there in great force, and kept the Moslems for several months at bay. In the end, but not without considerable loss, the citadel was stormed, and Hormuzân, with the garrison, subject to the decision of the Caliph, surrendered at discretion. They

Râm Hormuz and Tostar taken. A.H. XIX. A.D. 640.

[1] Otba died the same year, A.H. 17; and Moghîra succeeded him, as related above (somewhat prematurely), p. 91.

[2] One of the three brothers who defended Medina in the attack on Abu Bekr—*supra*, p. 14.

[3] Tostar, otherwise named Shuster.

were meanwhile put in chains; and Hormuzân was sent to answer before the Caliph for his repeated rebellion and breach of faith.'[1]

Capture of Sûs (Shushan).

The troops then laid siege to Sûs, the royal Shushan of ancient memories, and still a formidable city, planted as it was between two rivers, on a verdant plain with snow-clad mountains in the distance. The Arabs were here fortunate in drawing over to their side a body of Persian nobles with an important following; these were at once admitted to confidence; commands were conferred upon them, and they had the singular honour of a high place on the Caliph's civil list. Still it was not till after a protracted siege and conflict that Sûs was taken. Omar gave orders for the reverential maintenance of the tomb of Daniel in this the scene of his memorable vision 'by the river of Ulai;' and here, to the present day, the pious care of succeeding generations has preserved his shrine on the river bank through thirteen centuries of incessant change.[2]

The tomb of Daniel.

Jundai-Sabûr occupied.

The important city of Jundai-Sabûr, with the country around the sources of the Karoon, was also reduced by Nómân. But events were already transpiring in Khorasan, which at length opened the way to an advance upon the heart of Persia, and called away that leader to more stirring work.

Hormuzân sent a captive to Medîna.

The narrative of the deputation which, together with the spoil of Tostar, carried Hormuzân a prisoner to Medîna, will throw light on the reasons which weighed with the Caliph, and led to the withdrawal of the embargo upon a

[1] These conquests are variously placed by different traditions in A.H. XVII., XIX. and even XX. They immediately preceded the great campaign of Khorasan.

[2] Shushan, the ancient capital of Media, now called Sûs. Loftus gives an interesting history and description of Sûs, with a picture of the tomb of Daniel. (*Travels in Chaldæa and Susiana*, 1857, p. 322.) Our authorities say that Omar gave orders for *the body* of Daniel, which (as the legend goes) was still exposed to view, being honourably interred.

Mr. Baring, Secretary of the Teheran Legation, visited the spot in 1881, and found it much altered. The conical steeple, shown in Loftus' picture, was removed, when three or four years ago the tomb was rebuilt; and it was then surrounded by a gallery with a railing of brass and woodwork overlooking the river.

forward movement eastward. As they drew nigh to Medîna, his conductors dressed out their captive in his brocaded vestments, to show the people there the fashion of a Persian noble. Wearied with the reception of a deputation from Kûfa (for in this way he transacted much of the business from the provinces), Omar had fallen asleep, as he reclined, whip in hand, on his cushioned carpet in the Great Mosque. When the party entered the precincts of the court, 'Where is the Caliph?' asked the captive prince, looking round, 'and where the guards and warders?' It was, indeed, a marvellous contrast, that between the sumptuous palaces of the Chosroes, to which he had been used, and the simple surroundings of the mightier Caliph! Disturbed by the noise, Omar started up, and, divining who the stranger was, exclaimed, 'Blessed be the Lord, who hath humbled this man and the like of him!' He bade them disrobe the prisoner of his rich apparel and clothe him in coarse raiment. Then, still whip in hand, he upbraided the denuded captive and (Moghîra interpreting) bade him justify the repeated breach of his engagements. Hormuzân made as if fain to reply; then gasping, like one faint from thirst, he begged for a draught of water. 'Give it to him,' said the Caliph, 'and let him drink in peace.' 'Nay,' said the captive trembling, 'I fear to drink, lest some one slay me unawares.' 'Thy life is safe,' replied Omar, 'until thou hast drunk the water up.' The words had no sooner passed his lips than Hormuzân poured the contents of the vessel on the ground. 'I wanted not the water,' he said, 'but quarter, and now thou hast given it me.' 'Liar!' cried Omar in anger, 'thy life is forfeit.' 'But not,' interposed the bystanders, 'until he drink the water up.' 'Strange,' said Omar, foiled for once, 'the fellow hath deceived me, and yet I cannot spare the life of one who hath slain so many noble Moslems by his reiterated treachery. I swear that thou shalt not gain by thy deceit, unless thou shalt forthwith embrace Islam.' Hormuzân, nothing loth,

made profession of the Faith upon the spot; and thenceforth, taking up his residence at Medina, received a pension of the highest grade.[1]

Deputation urge removal of the ban against advance.

'What is the cause,' inquired Omar of the deputation, 'that these Persians thus persistently break faith and rebel against us? Maybe, ye treat them harshly.' 'Not so,' they answered; 'but thou hast forbidden us to enlarge our boundary; and the king is in their midst to stir them up. Two kings can in no wise exist together, until the one of them expel the other. It is not our harshness, but their king, that hath incited them to rise up against us after that they had made submission. And so it will go on until that thou shalt remove the ban and leave us to go forward, occupy their cities, and expel their king. Not till then will their vain hopes and machinations cease.'

Omar begins to see this.

These views were, moreover, enforced by Hormuzân. And the truth began now to dawn on Omar that necessity was laid upon him to withdraw the ban against advance. In self-defence, there was nothing left for him but to crush the Chosroes and take entire possession of his realm.

[1] Two thousand dirhems, the same as was given to warriors of Câdesîya and the Yermûk. And stipends of like amount were granted to the Persian nobles who had recently joined the Moslem army in Khuzistan.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONQUEST OF PERSIA.

A.H. XXI., XXII. A.D. 642, 643.

Persian campaign forced on Omar.

It was not long before any doubts that might still have rested in the mind of Omar were put an end to by the hostile attitude of the Persian Court; and he was again forced to bid his armies take the field with the avowed object of dealing a final blow at the empire.

Yezdegird gathers a great army against the Arabs. A.H. XX. A.D. 641.

After Câdesîya and the loss of Medâin, Yezdegird may have buoyed himself up with the hope that the Arabs, content with the fertile plains of Mesopotamia and Irâc-Araby, would leave him in undisturbed possession of the ample provinces of Persia proper beyond the mountain range. But the capture of the ancient capital of Media, and the threatening advance of the invaders in the direction of Ispahan and Persepolis, put an end to any such imagination. Teeming, restless hordes, still issuing from the Peninsula, began to press upon the border; and their irruption into the farther plains of Persia became clearly a mere question of time. The king, therefore, resolved once more upon a grand effort to stem the tide of invasion. With this view he ordered the governors of the various provinces to gather their forces together for a final attack. These, especially in the outlying regions, appear to have enjoyed an almost independent authority. But their interests were now knit together by the common danger. From the shores of the Caspian, therefore, to the Indian Ocean, and from the Oxus to the Persian Gulf, they rallied

around the royal standard, and in vast number gathered on the plain that lies below the snow-capped peak of Demavend.

Omar sends an army under Nómân to oppose them.

Tidings of the movement soon reached Kûfa, and Sád apprised the Caliph of the rising storm. Each courier, as he arrived, filled the city with fresh alarms. A hundred and fifty thousand men had assembled under Firuzân; now they were encamped at Hamadan, and now marching on Holwân; they would soon be close to Kûfa, and at their very doors. The crisis, no doubt, was serious. Any reverse to the Arabs on the mountain border would loosen their hold upon the plains below; and all the conquests in Chaldæa, with Medâin, and the settlements even of Kûfa and Bussorah, might be wrenched from their grasp. As on previous occasions of imminent danger, Omar at once declared his resolve to march forth in person. Encamped midway between the two cities of Irâc, his presence would restore confidence; and while able from thence to direct the movements in front, his reserve would be a defence to them in the rear. But the old arguments against leaving Medîna again prevailed, and Omar was persuaded to remain behind.[1] Nómân was recalled from the campaign just described for the reduction of Khuzistan, to take the chief command. Leaving strong garrisons behind, all available troops were pushed forward in two columns from Bussorah and Kûfa. The army at Sûs, besides furnishing a contingent for the main advance, was given the important task of effecting a diversion by an attack upon Persepolis, and so preventing the native forces in that quarter from joining the royal standard.

Battle of Nehâvend. A.H. XXI. A.D. 642.

Arrived at Holwân, Nómân sent forward spies, who reported that the enemy in great force was pitched at Nehâvend, on the plain of that name bounded on the north by

[1] It is remarkable that one of the arguments said to have been used, even on this late occasion, was that if the Caliph quitted Medîna there would be a risk of the Arab tribes of the Peninsula again rising up in apostasy and rebellion.

the lofty peaks of Elwand; but that the road thus far was clear.[1] So they marched forward, and were soon on the famous battle-ground, face to face with the Persians. The Moslems were 30,000 strong—one fifth part of the enemy; weak in numbers, but strong in faith, and nerved by the presence of many veterans and heroes of former fields. After two days' skirmishing, the Persians retired behind their line of fortification, from whence they were able at pleasure to issue forth and molest their adversaries. This went on for a time, till the Moslems, wearied by the delay, resolved on drawing them out. At Toleiha's instance they practised a feint for the purpose. They fell back, and, on the Persians following, they wheeled round and cut them off from their entrenchments. A fierce engagement followed, and in it Nómân was slain. But the bravery of the Arabs in the end achieved its wonted success. Of the enemy 30,000 are said to have been left dead on the field; the rest fled to an adjoining hill, and there 80,000 more were slain. Of the great army but shreds and scattered fragments effected their escape. The fate of the Captain-general, Firuzân, became proverbial. Flying towards Hamadan, he was stopped in a mountain pass choked by a caravan laden with honey. In seeking to turn the pass, he lost his way, was overtaken and slain. Hence the saying—'*Part of the Lord's host is the honey-bee.*'

Decisive effect of the victory.

The importance attached to this battle is signified by the tradition that a mounted Genius gave immediate notice of the victory and of the death of Nómân to a traveller in

[1] The spies were the famous Amr ibn Mádekerib (the warrior-poet met with before) and Toleiha. The latter (the quondam prophet of the Beni Asad) was long in returning from his scouting expedition—so much so that the army, becoming anxious, began to speak among themselves: 'What if Toleiha hath apostatised the second time!' When he made his appearance, therefore, there was a shout of joy. Toleiha, hearing of it, was much hurt at the imputation. 'Even had it been the old Arab faith,' he said, 'which I once professed much more this blessed faith of Islam, I should have disdained to change it for the jargon of these barbarians.'

the Hejâz, who at once communicated it to Omar at Medîna. Hamadan fell into the hands of the victorious army; and the royal treasure and jewels, deposited for safety in the great Fire temple, were delivered up. The chiefs and people of Irâc-Ajem, that is, the western districts of Persia proper, submitted themselves and became tributary. The booty was immense; and amongst it two caskets of priceless gems, which Omar placed in the treasury at Medîna; but next morning, the courier that brought them was recalled, and Omar told him that he had seen a vision of angels, which warned him of punishment hereafter if he kept those jewels. 'Take them hence,' he said; 'sell them, and let the price be divided amongst the army.' They fetched 4,000,000 dirhems.

Capture of Rei. A.H. XXII. A.D 643.

Omar was disconsolate at the death of Nómân; and he promoted his brother Nóeim ibn Mocarrin (one of the three heroes of Dzul Cassa) to high command. He had now embarked on an enterprise from which there was no returning. The proud Yezdegird refused to yield, and Omar no longer scrupled pursuing him to the bitter end. But a long series of campaigns was yet needful, effectually to reduce the empire. These it is not the object of this work to trace otherwise than in such brief and cursory way as shall enable the reader to estimate the expanding area and growing obligations of the Caliphate. The warlike races of the southern shores of the Caspian gathered under Isfandiar, brother of the ill-fated Rustem, for the defence of Rei, one of the royal cities of Persia. Assuming the offensive, they began to harry the Mussulman garrisons. Nóeim advanced to meet them; and another great battle and decisive victory placed the city at his mercy.[1] Isfandiar retired to Azerbâijân; where, again defeated, he was taken prisoner; and at last, without much compunction, he threw

[1] The battle was fought at Bowaj Rûd. Nóeim demolished the fortifications of Rei, and laid the foundations of a new city. The ruins of Rei, some five or six miles south-east of Teheran, are still to be seen of considerable extent. See Porter's *Travels in Georgia and Persia.*

in his lot, and made common cause with the invading army. From Rei, Yezdegird fled south to Ispahan; finding no shelter there, he hurried on to Kermân; then he retired to Balkh; and at last he took refuge in Merve, whence he sought the aid of the Khâcân of the Turks, and of the Emperor of China. The Khâcân espoused his cause; and for several years the contest was waged with varying success in the vicinity of Merve. But in the end the Turks retired, and with them Yezdegird, across the Oxus. The conflict was subsequently renewed, and nine or ten years afterwards, in the reign of Othman, Yezdegird, bereft of his treasures and deserted by his followers, who in vain besought him to tender his submission, perished miserably in the hut of a miller, whither he had fled for refuge.

Yezdegird flies to Merve, where Turks espouse his cause.

Death of Yezdegird. A.H. XXXI. A.D. 651.

On the fall of Rei, the Arabs lost no time in turning their arms against all quarters at once of the Persian empire. Six considerable armies, drawn from Kûfa and Bussorah, and continually replenished from Arabia and the provinces by soldiers of fortune thirsting for rapine and renown, invaded as many different regions; and these, as they were overrun, fell each under the government of the leader who reduced it. Thus, one after another, Fars, Kermân, Mokrân, Sejestan, Khorasan, and Azerbâijân, were annexed to the empire of Islam. Some of these, though subordinate in name, had been virtually independent; and so now, even after the heart had ceased to beat, they maintained a dangerous vitality. When tributary and reduced to an outward subjection, the people would ever and again rise in rebellion; and it was long before the Arabs could subside into a settled life, or feel secure away from the protection of garrisoned entrenchments. But the privileges of Islam on the mere confession of the Faith were so considerable and enticing, that the adherents of the Zoroastrian worship were unable to resist the attraction; by degrees the Persian race came over to the dominant creed, and in the end opposition

Reduction of the Persian empire.

Subordinate position of the conquered races.

ceased. The notices of Zoroastrian families, and of Fire temples destroyed in after reigns, show indeed that in many quarters the conversion was slow and partial.[1] But after the fall of the Court, the death of Yezdegird, and the extinction of outlying authority, the political and social inducements to join the faith of the conquerors were, for the most part, irresistible. The polished Persian formed a new element in Moslem society. But however noble and refined, he long held a place inferior to, and altogether distinct from, that maintained by the rude but dominant races of Arabian blood. Individuals or families belonging to the subject peoples, on embracing Islam, attached themselves to some Arab chief or clan, as adherents, or 'clients' of the same; and in this dependent position could claim some of the privileges of the ruling faith. But neither here nor in other lands did they intermarry with the Arabs on equal terms; they were looked down upon as of an inferior caste. Thus, although in theory, on becoming Mussulmans, the conquered nations thereby entered the equal brotherhood of the Faith, they formed, not the less, a lower estate. The race and language, ancestral dignity, and political privileges, of the Arabs continued to be paramount throughout the empire for many generations.

Miraculous tale connected with the siege of Darâbgird

While passing by thus cursorily the military details of outlying conquest, there is one episode which I may mention, as containing a curious relation of miraculous interposition, such as we rarely meet with in the tradition of events subsequent to the Prophet's death. The warrior Saria had long besieged with inadequate force the stronghold Darâbgird in Kermân, when a band of Kurds came suddenly down to its

[1] The Zoroastrians must still have been numerous, especially in the outlying provinces, even in the Abbasside reigns. The social and political inducements brought to bear on them, and to induce a profession of Islam that was at first but superficial, are well brought out in 'The Apology of Al Kindy' (Smith and Elder, 1882). See especially the speech of Al Mâmûn, pp. xii. and 33.

relief. The small Arab army, taken thus on both sides, would have been cut to pieces, had not Saria, warned by a cry from heaven, promptly sought refuge upon a hill at his rear. Omar on that very day (so the tradition runs), as he conducted the Friday service in the Great Mosque at Medîna, saw distinctly in a vision the impending disaster, and trembling for his safety, cried aloud, 'To the hill, O Saria! to the hill!' It was this voice which reached Saria, clear from the sky, just in time to enable him to make good his retreat to the hill, from whence, having rallied his troops, he turned again and discomfited the enemy. Omar, we are told, related the whole affair of the retreat and subsequent victory, at the moment it occurred; and with this the courier's report, received several weeks after, was found exactly to tally.[1]

[1] It is difficult to account for the origin of so strange a tale. It illustrates the heterogeneous materials of which our authorities are still composed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LATER YEARS OF OMAR'S REIGN—DOMESTIC EVENTS.

A.H. XVII.–XXIII. A.D. 638–644.

Quiet in Syria, Arabia, and Egypt.

WHILE the arms of Islam were thus rapidly reducing province after province in the East to the sway of Omar from the Caspian to the Indian Ocean, the wave of conquest was for the time calmed down in Asia Minor. There had now for some time prevailed a period of comparative quiet. After the death of Heraclius there was no spirit left in the Byzantine empire to continue the struggle either by land or by sea. Desultory attempts were made, indeed, at intervals upon the coast; but they were followed by no lasting success.[1] Muâvia was busy meanwhile consolidating the administration of Syria; and, with a sagacious foresight, strengthening his hold upon the provinces against the contingencies of the future. Elsewhere peace prevailed. Shorahbîl ruled over the district of the Jordan. Amru maintained a firm government in Egypt; and, pushing a chronic warfare against the native tribes and the Roman settlements on the coast of Africa, gradually extended the boundaries of Islam towards the West. Arabia, still pouring forth its unquiet spirits to fight in the wars abroad, was tranquil at home under its various governors.

Omar visits Mecca

Besides the journeys into Syria already mentioned, Omar only quitted his residence at Medîna for the purpose

[1] Ascalon is stated to have fallen as late as A.H. XXIII., i.e. A.D. 643. If so, it must have held out so long only in virtue of its maritime position. But we have no details.

of performing the annual pilgrimage.[1] The governors of the various provinces were wont to repair to Mecca to discharge at that season the same religious obligation; and the Caliph used to improve the opportunity for conferring with them, as they returned by way of Medîna, on such provincial business as needed his attention. The occasion, in fact, served the purposes of an annual report delivered orally of local government. Several years before his death, Omar spent three weeks within the sacred precincts of Mecca, and enlarged the space around the Kâaba. The dwellings approaching too closely the Holy House were pulled down, and the first step taken towards the formation of a grand square and piazza fitting the place of worship for all nations. Some of the owners refused to sell their patrimony; but the houses were demolished nevertheless, aud the price in compensation left at their disposal in the treasury. The boundary pillars of the *Haram*, or Sacred Territory, were renewed. And convenient halting places were constructed at the pilgrim stations on the road to Medîna, for the custody of which, and the care of the adjoining springs of water, the local tribes were held responsible.

and founds Grand Square around Kâaba.

The seventh year of Omar's Caliphate was distinguished by the bursting forth of volcanic fires from a hill called Leila in the neighbourhood of Medîna. The Caliph gave command for a general distribution of alms amongst the poor. The people joined in the pious work, and the volcano stopped.[2]

Volcano near Medîna. A.H. XIX.

In the same year a naval expedition was sent to Abyssinia, across the Red Sea, to check attacks upon the

Disastsr in Red Sea.

[1] Omar presided every year, excepting the first of his Caliphate, when the struggle with the Byzantins and Persian empires was at its height. He is also said to have thrice visited Mecca for the Omra, or Lesser Pilgrimags. (*Life of Mahomet*, p. xii.)

[2] The superstition attributing the cessation of the volcano to an extraordinary dole of alms is not worse than that which seeks to check the devastations of Vesuvius by the liquefactiou of the blood of St. Januarius in the cathedral of Naples.

A.H. XIX. A.D. 640.

Moslems on the coast, or on the borders of Nubia. The vessels were wrecked, and the expedition suffered great privations. The disaster led Omar to vow that he would never again permit his troops to embark on an element fraught with such danger. It was not till some years after his death that the Mussulmans gathered courage to brave the risks of naval encounter in the Mediterranean Sea.[1]

Omar dreads the sea.

Moghîra, Governor of Bussorah, arraigned on charge of adultery, A.H. XVII. A.D. 638,

In the governors appointed to control the turbulent cities of Kûfa and Bussorah, Omar was not altogether fortunate. Otba, Governor of Bussorah, died shortly after rescuing the unfortunate expedition to Persepolis.[2] The choice of a successor in Moghîra ibn Shoba, was ill-advised. Of rude and repulsive aspect, he had committed murder in his youth at Tâyif, and Islam had not softened his nature or improved his morals. The heartless insult which he offered to an aged Christian princess of the house of Hîra, whom he demanded in marriage on the capture of that city, has been handed down in Arab song. His harem, stocked with fourscore wives and concubines, failed to satisfy his vagrant passion. His enemies at Bussorah watched his movements from an adjoining building; and through a party-window were witness to an intrigue with a Bedouin lady, who had visited his house. When he issued forth to lead the public prayer, they shouted him down as an adulterer; and Omar summoned him to his court to answer the accusation. By any reasonable law of evidence, the crime had been established beyond a

and acquitted.

[1] Omar consulted Amru on the subject, who was of the same mind, and said—

Dûd âla ûd
Fa in yaksar al 'ûd
Halak al dûd.

'An insect floating on a splinter; if the splinter break, the insect perisheth;' signifying thereby the risks of the mariner.

[2] Otba came on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and there besought Omar to allow him to resign his government. Omar refused, and as Otba died on his way back, the Caliph was much distressed. He visited his tomb to pray over it, and said that he would have reproached himself as the cause of his death—'had it not been already written in the decrees of the Lord.'

doubt; but, under the strange ordinance promulgated by Mahomet on the misadventure of his favourite wife, there was a flaw in the testimony of Ziâd, the fourth witness. And the Caliph, with an ill-concealed groan at the miscarriage of justice, ordered the witnesses who had brought the charge to be scourged according to the law, and the accused released. 'Strike hard,' cried the barefaced culprit, addressing the unwilling minister of the law;—'strike hard, and comfort my heart thereby!' 'Hold thy peace,' said Omar, 'it wanted little to convict thee; and then thou shouldest have been stoned to the death as an adulterer.' The guilty chief was silenced, but not abashed. He continued to reside in Medîna, a crafty courtier at the Caliph's gate.[1]

[1] We have met Moghîra in the lifetime of the Prophet. First at Hodeibia, where the murder was cast in his teeth by his uncle, and subsequently at the demolition of the great idol of Tâyif, &c. (*Life of Mahomet*, pp. 370, 467.) He was red-haired, one-eyed, obese and repulsive in appearance, but insinuating in manner and speech. One of his eighty concubines, when his ill looks were mentioned, said, 'Yes, he is a sweet conserve but on a beggarly dish.'

The aged princess whom he demanded in marriage on the fall of Hîra, was Hind, daughter of Nómân V. Some threescore years before she had been married to Adi, who, when tutor to her father, had caught a glimpse of her in the church at Hîra. Adi was executed for some offence by the Chosroes, and Hind then retired into a convent near Hîra, called, after her, Dâira Hind. See the strange story of Moghîra's coarse conduct towards her as related by M. Caussin de Perceval, vol. ii. p. 150; and *Life of Mahomet* (1st edition), vol. i. pp. clxxix. *et seq.*

For the law of evidence on the charge of adultery, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. 313. The whole story is significant as manifesting the deterioration of Arab life from the ancient spirit and customs, which, amongst the Bedouins, admitted of social intercourse between the sexes without such scandals. The lady's name was Omm Jamîl, of the Beni Aâmir ibn Sassâá, and is said by Tabari to have been a widow. 'This lady used openly to visit Moghîra and other chief men of Bussora, a custom common amongst some of the ladies of that time.' But the old Arab chivalry towards the sex was rapidly disappearing under the system which raised the slave-girl giving issue to her lord to the position of *Omm Walad*, or freed-wife, and her children to the same legitimacy as the children of the noble-born. This, coupled with the laxity of divorce and remarriage, was speedily lowering the position of the sex, and rendered the strict use of 'the Veil' an absolute necessity for the decent observances of social life; and gradually, but surely, bringing about the wretched condition of women, together with the seclusion of the harem, as we now find it in Moslem lands.

Abu Mûsa, Governor of Bussorah,

As successor to Moghîra, Omar appointed Abu Mûsa al Ashâri, Governor of Bussorah—a man of a very different stamp. Of small stature, smooth in face, and little presence, he had yet distinguished himself on the field of Honein; and had been the envoy of Mahomet to Hadhramaut.[1] He wanted strength and firmness (as we shall see hereafter) for the stormy times that were coming; but he was wise and sufficiently able to hold the restless Bedouins of Bussorah in check. Belonging to the tribe of Ashâr, it was perhaps an advantage, in the jealousies now growing up, that he was himself outside the clique of Mecca and Medîna citizens. But he still felt the need of Coreishite influence to support his government; and as he departed he said to Omar: 'Thou must strengthen my hands with a company of the Companions of the Prophet, for verily they are as salt in the midst of the people;' —so he took in his train nine-and-twenty men of mark along with him. But even Abu Mûsa was near losing his command. The story is curious, and illustrates Omar's style of government. After a successful campaign against the Kurds in Ispahan, Abu Mûsa, as was usual, sent a deputation to Medîna to report the victory, and carry to the Caliph the royal Fifth. Dhabba, a discontented citizen, desired to be of the number, but was not allowed. He forthwith set out alone to Medîna, and there laid certain charges against Abu Mûsa, who was summoned by Omar to clear himself. After some days of confinement to his quarters, he was brought before the Caliph, face to face with his accuser. The first charge was that a band of youths, from amongst the captives taken in the recent expedition, had been used by him as personal attendants. 'True,' said Abu Mûsa; 'these sons of Persian chieftains did me good service as guides; therefore I paid their ransom as prize of the column, and

is accused of malversation, but acquitted. A.H. XXIII. A.D. 643.

[1] In the action of Autâs following the field of Honein, his uncle, who commanded, was slain; and Abu Mûsa took up the banner and routed the enemy. He had more physical than moral courage, as we shall see at the great Arbitration.

now, being free, they serve me.' 'He speaketh the truth,' answered Dhabba, 'but what I said was also true.' The second accusation was that he held two landed properties. 'I do,' explained Abu Mûsa; 'the one is for the subsistence of my family, the other for the sustenance of the people.' Dhabba answered as before. The third was that the governor had in his household a girl who fared too sumptuously. Abu Mûsa was silent. Again, he was charged with making over the seals of office to Ziâd; which was admitted by Abu Mûsa, 'because he found the youth to be wise and fit for office.' The last charge was that he had given the largess of a thousand dirhems to a poet; and this Abu Mûsa admitted having done, with the view to preserve his authority from being weakened by scurrilous attacks. The Caliph received the explanation, and permitted Abu Mûsa to resume his government, but desired him to send Ziâd and the girl to Medîna. He was so pleased with the knowledge and readiness of Ziâd, who was already foreshadowing the greatness of his administrative talent, that he sent him back with the full approval of his employment in the affairs of the province; but the girl was detained in confinement at Medîna. With Dhabba the Caliph was very angry. Out of malice he had sought to ruin Abu Mûsa by one-sided allegations. 'Truth perverted is no better,' Omar said, 'than is a lie; and a lie leadeth to hell fire.'[1]

Sád deposed at Kûfa. A.H. XXI. A.D. 642.

Kûfa remained for several years under the rule of Sád, its founder, the conqueror of Chaldæa and Medâin. At length, in the ninth year of Omar's Caliphate, a faction sprang up against him. The Bedouin jealousy of the

[1] It is not said that he punished the calumniator. What was the fault of the girl which led to her imprisonment is not clear. Possibly there was some scandal of undue influence over Abu Mûsa, to whom some say she was given as a bribe by his predecessor Moghîra. As regards the gift to the poet, Weil remarks that for a smaller offence of the same kind, Khâlid was deposed with ignominy—which is true. This is the same Ziâd of whom we have heard before, as the putative son of Abu Sofiân, destined hereafter to assume a prominent position.

Coreish had already begun to work; and Sád was accused of unfairness in distributing the booty. There was also imputed to him the lack of martial spirit and backwardness to show himself in the field, a revival of the old charge made slanderously against him at Câdesîya.[1] He was summoned, with his accusers, to Medîna; but the main offence of which he was found guilty was one of little concern to them. Sád in his public ministrations had cut short the customary prayers; and Omar, deeming the offence unpardonable, deposed him.

Changes in the government of Kûfa.

To fill a vacancy requiring, beyond all others in the empire, skill, experience, and power, Omar unwisely appointed Ammâr, who, having been, as a persecuted slave at Mecca, one of Mahomet's earliest converts, possessed a merit second to none in the Faith, but was a man of no ability, and, moreover, advanced in years.[2] The citizens of Kûfa were not long in finding out his incapacity; and, at their desire, Omar transferred Abu Mûsa from Bussorah to rule over them. But it was no easy work to curb the factious populace. They took offence at his slave for buying fodder as it crossed the bridge; and for so slight a cause the Caliph, after he had been governor for a year, sent him back again to Bussorah. Another nomination had already been determined on, when the artful Moghîra, finding Omar alone in the Great Mosque, wormed the secret out of him; and dwelling on the grave burden of a hundred thousand turbulent citizens, suggested that the new candidate was not fit to bear it. 'But,' said Omar, 'the men of Kûfa have pressed me to send them neither a headstrong tyrant, nor a weak and impotent believer.' 'As for a weak believer,' answered Moghîra, 'his faith is for himself, his

[1] Above, p. 166.

[2] See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 72. He was one of the friendless converts whose freedom Abu Bekr purchased, and thus saved him from the persecution of the Coreish.

weakness falleth on thee; as for a strong tyrant, his tyranny injureth himself alone, and his strength is all for thee.' Omar was caught in the snare, and, the scandals of Bussorah notwithstanding, was weak enough to confer on Moghîra the government of Kûfa. With all his defects, Moghîra was, without doubt, the strong man needed for that stiff-necked city; and he held his position there during the two remaining years of Omar's reign.[1]

Evil arising from change of governors.

The vacillation of Omar, and his readiness, at the complaint of the citizens of Kûfa, once and again to shift their ruler, led that turbulent populace to know their power, and gave head to the factious temper already disquieting the city. It was a weak though kindly spirit which led the Caliph to nominate Ammâr to a post for which he had no aptitude whatever. Upon his recall, Omar asked whether his removal had caused him pain. 'It did not much rejoice me,' replied Ammâr, 'when thou gavest me the command; but I confess that I was troubled when thou didst depose me.' To which Omar responded amiably: 'I knew when I appointed thee that thou wast not a man fitted to govern; but verily I was minded (and here he quoted from the Corân) *to be gracious unto the weak and humble ones in the land; and to make them patterns of religion, and heirs of the good things in this present life.*'[2] At the same time, he appointed another early convert of singular religious merit, Abdallah ibn

[1] The manner in which Moghîra got hold of the secret is characteristic of his artfulness. He perceived Jobeir in close conference with the Caliph. Now Omar had apprised Jobeir of his intention to appoint him Governor of Kûfa; but bade him, for the present, to keep the matter secret. Moghîra, suspecting the truth, sent one of his wives with a present of viands to Jobeir's wife, who, caught in the trap, accepted the congratulatory gift. Moghîra, thus assured that his suspicions were well founded, hurried off to Omar, and representing that he had got hold of a weak fellow, who could not even keep the secret of his nomination for a day, got the appointment (as in the text) for himself. Some say that Omar afterwards intended to reappoint Sâd (who seems to have been removed on very inadequate grounds) to Kûfa, but that he died before he could give effect to the intention.

[2] Sura xxviii. 4.

Masûd, who had also been a slave at Mecca, to a post at Kûfa, for which, however, he was better fitted—the chancellorship of the treasury. He had been the body-servant of the Prophet, who was used to call him 'light in the body, but weighty in the Faith.' He was learned in the Corân, and had a 'reading' of his own, to which, as the best text, he held persistently against all recensions.[1]

Additional endowment to Bussorah.

There was still a considerable jealousy between Bussorah and its more richly endowed sister city. The armies of both had contributed towards the conquest of Khuzistan, and had shared accordingly. But Bussorah, with its teeming thousands, was comparatively poor; and Omar, to equalise the benefits of all who had served in the earlier campaigns, assigned to them increased allowances, to be met from the surplus revenues of the Sawâd administered by Kûfa.[2]

Officers of State: judicial, military, fiscal, and spiritual.

In the more important governments, the judicial office was discharged by a functionary who held his commission immediately from the Caliph.[3] The control of all departments remained with the governor, who, in virtue of his supreme office, led the daily prayers in public; and, especially on the Fridays, gave an address, or sermon, which had often an important political bearing. Military and fiscal functions, which vested at the first, like all other powers, in the governor's hands, came eventually to be discharged by officers specially appointed to the duty. Ministers of religion were also commissioned by the State. From the extraordinary rapidity with which cities and provinces were converted, risk of error rose, in respect both of creed and ritual, to the vast multitudes of 'new believers.' To obviate

[1] See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 64. His height only equalled that of an ordinary man seated.

[2] An extraordinary grant of one hundred dirhems was made to each. The civil list and pensions were settled by Omar in his *Dewân*; but the means of paying the allowances was by local assignments; so that each city was dependent on its endowment, from which all the expenditure of administration had to be met.

[3] According to some authorities, however, neither Abu Bekr nor Omar appointed any Câdhy to Kûfa or Bussorah.

this danger, Omar appointed teachers in every country, whose business it was to instruct the people—men and women separately—in the Corân and the requirements of the Faith. Early in his reign, he imposed it also, as an obligation to be enforced by the magistrate, that all, both great and small, should attend the public services, especially on every Friday; and that in the month of Ramadhan, the whole body of the Moslems should be constant in the assembling of themselves together in their Mosques.

Omar establishes era of Hegira. A.H. XVII.

To Omar is popularly ascribed, not only the establishment of the Dewân, and offices of systematic account, but also the regulation of the Arabian year. He introduced for this purpose the Mahometan Era, commencing with the new moon of the first month (Moharram) in the year of the Prophet's flight from Mecca. Hence the Mahometan year was named the *Hegira*, or 'Era of the Flight.'[1]

Deterioration of social and domestic life.

Of the state of Mahometan society at this period we have not the materials for judging closely. Constant employment in the field, no doubt, tended to arrest the action of the depraving influences which, in times of ease and luxury, began to relax the sanctions and taint the purity of Bedouin life. But there is ample indication that the relations between the sexes were already rapidly deteriorating. The baneful influence of polygamy, especially now that it was intensified by the husband's power of arbitrary divorce and the unlimited licence of servile concubinage, was quickened by the vast multitudes of slave-girls taken by the army, and distributed or sold, both among the soldiers and the community at large. The wife of noble blood held, under the old chivalrous code of the Arabs, a position of honour and supremacy in the household, from which she could be ousted by no base-born rival, however fair or fruitful. She was

[1] The calculation was already by strictly lunar notation of months, according to the Arab calendar; for that had been fixed by a Divine ordinance at the Farewell Pilgrimage. (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 486.) But the commencement of the era, and numbering of the years, was introduced only now. Note that the *i* is short in Hegira.

now to be, in the estimation of her husband, but one amongst many, to whose level she was gradually being lowered. If his slave-girls bore him children, they became at once, as *Omm Walad*, free;[1] and in point of legitimacy and inheritance the offspring was equal to the children of the free and noble wife. Beauty and blandishment began to outshine birth and breeding, and the favourite of the hour too often displaced her noble mistress.

Story of the Princess Leila.

With the coarse sensualist, revelling like Moghîra in a harem well stocked with Greek and Persian captives, this might have been expected. But it was not the less the case in many a household of greater refinement and repute. Some lady, ravished, it may have been, from a noble home, and endowed with the charms and graces of a courtly life, would captivate her master, and for the moment rule supreme. The story of the Princess Leila will afford a sample. This beautiful daughter of Judi, the Ghassanide chief slain at Dûma, was bought by the victorious Khâlid from the common prize. The fame of her charms had already reached Medîna, and kindled a romantic flame in the breast of Abd al Rahmân, son of Abu Bekr. He was wild in his passion for her, and sang his grief in verses still preserved.[2] At last he became her happy master, and she was despatched from the camp to his home. At once he freed her, and took her to wife. His love for this lady was so great that, forsaking all other, he kept him only to her—so long as her beauty lasted. She was the queen of his household. But after a time she fell sick and began to waste away. The beauty went, and with it her master's love; and so her turn, too, came to be forsaken. Then his comrades said to him: 'Why thus keep her on, neglected and forsaken here? Suffer her to go back to her people and her home.' So he

[1] See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 349.

[2] Take, for example, two lines with the play on the name *Leila*, or night—

I thought of Leila, but the heavens are between us;
Neither is her night (Leila) mine; nor my night hers.

suffered her. Leila's fate was happy compared with that of others. Tired of his toy, the owner would sell her to become, if still young and beautiful, the plaything of another; or if, like Leila, disease or years had fretted her beauty, to eke out the weary, wistless, hopeless lot of a household slave.

The use of wine.

Relaxation of manners is significantly marked by the frequent notice of punishment for drunkenness. There are not wanting instances of even governors deposed for the offence. Omar was rigorous in imposing the legal penalty. He did not shrink from commanding that stripes should be inflicted, even upon his own son and his boon companions, for the use of wine. At Damascus, the scandal grew to such a height that Abu Obeida had to summon a band of the citizens, with the heroes Dhirâr and Abu Jandal at their head, for the offence. Hesitating in such a case to enforce the law, he acquainted Omar with the circumstances, and begged that the offenders, being penitent, might be forgiven. An angry answer came: 'Gather an assembly,' he wrote in the stern language of his early days;—'gather an assembly, and bring them forth. Then ask, *Is wine lawful, or is it forbidden?* If they say *forbidden*, lay eighty stripes upon each one of them; if they say *lawful*, then behead them every one.' They confessed that it was forbidden, and submitted themselves to the ignominious punishment.[1]

Influence of female slavery in the family.

The weakness for wine may have been a relic of 'the days of Ignorance,' when the poet sang 'Bury me under the roots of the juicy vine.' But there were influences altogether new at work in the vast accession to the households of believers everywhere of captive women from other lands. Greek, Persian, and Egyptian maidens abounded in every harem. The Jews and Christians amongst them might retain their

[1] Many stories are told of Omar's stern punishment of wine-drinkers. The house of one who surreptitiously trafficked in spirits, he caused to be burned over his head. Another culprit, expelled for drinking, escaped to the Byzantine territory and apostatised.

ancestral faith, whether in freedom or bondage, whether as concubines or married to their masters; and with their ancestral faith retain much also of the habits of their fatherland; and the same may be said of the heathen bond-maids from Africa and the Parsee slave-girls from Persia, even if outwardly converted to the Moslem faith. The countless progeny of such alliances, though ostensibly bred in the creed and practice of Islam, must have inherited much of the nationality of the mothers by whom they were nursed and brought up. The crowded harem, with its Divine sanction of servile concubinage, was also an evil school for the rising generation. Wealth, luxury, and idleness were under such circumstances provocative of a licence and indulgence which too often degenerated into debauchery.

Intemperance, dissipation, and depravity.

For, apart from the field of war and the strife of faction, Moslem life was idle and inactive. There was nothing to relieve its sanctimonious voluptuousness. The hours not spent in the harem were divided between listless conversation in the city knots and clubs, and formal prayers in the Mosque five times a day. Ladies no longer appeared in public excepting as they flitted along shrouded beneath 'the veil.' The light and grace, the charm and delicacy, which their presence imparted to Arab society before Islam, was gone. The soft warm colouring of nature, so beautifully portrayed in ancient Arabian song, was chilled and overcast. Games of chance, and such like amusements, common to mankind, were forbidden by law as stigmatised in the Corân; even speculation was checked by the ban put upon interest for money lent. And so, Mussulman life, cut off, beyond the threshold of the harem, from the ameliorating influences of the gentler sex, began to assume that dreary, morose, and cheerless aspect which it has ever since retained.[1] But nature is not thus to be pent up and trifled with; the rebound must come; and with the rebound, humanity, in

[1] See *The Corân: its Teaching and Precepts*, p. 61.

casting off its shackles, burst likewise through the barriers of the Faith. The gay youth of Islam, cloyed with the dull delights of the sequestered harem, were tempted when they went abroad to evade the restrictions of their creed, and to seek in the cup, in music, games, and dissipation the excitement which the young and the light-hearted will demand. In the greater cities, intemperance and libertinism were rife. The canker spread, oftentimes the worse because concealed. The more serious classes of believers were scandalised not only by amusements, luxuries, and voluptuous living, held to be inconsistent with their creed, but with immoralities of a kind which may not even be named. The development of this evil came later on, but the tares were already being sown even under the strict and puritanical Caliphate of Omar.[1]

Simplicity of Omar's domestic life.

Such excesses were, however, for the present confined to foreign parts. At home, the first Caliphs, fortified by the hallowed associations of Medîna, and at a distance from the scenes of luxury and temptation, preserved the severe simplicity of ancient Arab life. This, it is true, was not inconsistent (as we see even in the case of Mahomet) with the uncontrolled indulgences of the harem. But as concerns the Caliphs themselves, Abu Bekr, Omar, and Othmân, their lives in this respect were, considering the licence of Islam, temperate and modest. Omar, we are told, had no passion for the sex. Before the Hegira, he contracted marriage with four wives, but two of these, preferring to remain at Mecca, were thus separated from him. At Medina, he married five more, one of whom he divorced.[2] His last

[1] For a description of the shameless demoralisation that prevailed, especially among the youth of Damascus and Baghdad, I must refer to the learned and elaborate work of H. von Kremer, *Culturgeschichte des Orients unter dem Chalifen.*

[2] One of the wives was a captive maiden from Yemen, who, having, as his bond-maid, borne him a son and daughter, became, *ipso facto*, free. No mention is made of other slave-girls in his harem; but this affords no presumption that he did not consort with such; for no account is made of servile

marriage was in the eighth year of his Caliphate, when over fifty, perhaps nearer sixty, years of age. Three years before, he had married a granddaughter of the Prophet, under circumstances which cast a curious light on his domestic ways. He conceived a liking for Omm Kolthûm, the young unmarried sister of Ayesha, through whom a betrothal was arranged. But Ayesha found that the light-hearted damsel had no desire to wed the aged Caliph. In this dilemma she had recourse to Amru, who undertook the task of breaking off the match. He broached the subject to Omar, who at first imagined that Amru wished the maiden for himself. 'Nay,' said Amru, 'that I do not; but she hath been bred indulgently in the family of her father Abu Bekr, and I fear that she may ill brook thine austere manners, and the gravity of thy household.' 'But,' replied Omar, 'I have already engaged to marry her; and how can I break it off?' 'Leave that to me,' said Amru; 'thou hast indeed a duty to provide for Abu Bekr's family, but the heart of this maiden is not with thee. Let her alone, and I will show thee a better than she, another Omm Kolthûm, even the daughter of Aly and Fâtima, the granddaughter of the Prophet.' So Omar married this other maiden, and she bore him a son and daughter; but there was no eventual issue in this line.[1]

Death of persons of distinction.

Many of those whose names we have been familiar with in the life of Mahomet were now dropping off the scene. Fâtima, the daughter, and Safia, the aunt, of Mahomet, Zeinab his wife, and Mary his Coptic bond-maid, Yezîd the son of Abu Sofiân, Abu Obeida, Khâlid, and Bilâl, and many others who bore a conspicuous part in the great *rôle* of

concubines, and they are rarely or never mentioned, unless they chanced to bear offspring.

It was his daughter from whom the tradition is derived that he had no special weakness for the sex, and married chiefly for the sake of issue.

[1] In the tradition both the maidens are spoken of as Omm Kolthûm; but that must have been by anticipation, since they were so called as having sons of that name.

the Prophet's life, had all passed away, and a new race was springing up in their place.

Abu Sofiân himself survived till A.H. 32, and died aged eighty-eight years. One of his eyes he lost at the siege of Tâyif, and the other at the battle of the Yermûk, so that he had long been blind. He divorced Hind, the mother of Muâvia—she who 'chewed the liver' of Hamza at the battle of Ohod. As for her, we are told that, having received a loan from Omar, she supported herself by merchandise. What was the reason of the divorce does not appear.[1] Abu Sofiân, and Hind, his wife.

[1] On one occasion Hind repaired to Syria and warned Muâvia against giving money to his father, Abu Sofiân, who was in need, lest he should incur the reproach of Omar and the people; and Muâvia accordingly sent him away with only one hundred dinars. But tradition, through Abbasside channels, begins now to take so strong and bitter a tinge of hatred against the Omeyyad family, that tales regarding it must be received with caution.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DEATH OF OMAR.

A.H. XXIII. A.D. 644.

Omar performs pilgrimage; end of A.H. XXIII. October, A.D. 644.

It was now the eleventh year of Omar's Caliphate, and though fifty-five years of age (according to others over sixty) he was full of vigour and vigilant in the discharge of the vast responsibilities that devolved upon him.[1] In the last month of the twenty-third year of the Hegira, he journeyed, as was his wont, to Mecca; and taking on this occasion the Widows of Mahomet in his suite, performed with them the rites of the annual Pilgrimage. He had returned but a few days to Medîna, when his reign came to a tragical and untimely end.

Abu Lulû, a Persian slave, promises to make a windmill.

A Persian slave, Feroze, called more familiarly Abu Lulû, had been brought by Moghîra from Irâc. Carried off a prisoner in his youth by the Romans, he had early embraced Christianity; and now, captured from them by the Moslems, his fate was to endure a second captivity as Moghîra's slave. When the crowd of prisoners was marched into Medîna from the battle of Nehâvend (which is said to have been his birthplace) he gave vent to his grief; the sight opened springs of tenderness long pent up, and

[1] By some authorities he was now sixty-three; but this was a favourite age with traditionists, being that at which the Prophet died (*supra*, p. 119). He was born before the 'Sacrilegious War,' which lasted ten years, A.D. 580–590 (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 14); but his birth was probably at the end of the last great battle, which terminated that war. This would make him twenty-six at his conversion, and fifty-five at his death. If born at the commencement of the war, he would now be ten years older. The true date may lie between the two extremes; and it is not unlikely that he was near sixty years of age at his death.

stroking the heads of the little ones, he exclaimed: 'Verily, *Omar hath consumed my bowels!*' He practised the trade of a carpenter; and Moghîra, as his owner, shared the profit. Meeting Omar in the market-place,[1] he cried out, 'Commander of the Faithful! right me of my wrong, for verily Moghîra hath assessed me heavily.' 'At how much?' asked the Caliph. 'At two dirhems a day.' 'And what is thy trade?' 'A carpenter, designer, and worker in iron.' 'It is not much,' replied Omar, 'for a clever artificer like thee. I am told that thou couldst make for me a mill driven by the wind.' 'It is true.' 'Come then,' continued the Caliph, 'and make me such a mill that shall be driven by the wind.' 'If spared,' said the captive in a surly voice, 'I will make a mill for thee, the fame whereof shall reach from the East even to the far West;' and he went on his way. Omar remarked, as he passed on, the sullen demeanour of Abu Lulû:—'That slave,' he said, 'spoke threateningly to me just now.'[2]

Omar mortally wounded by Abu Lulû.

Next morning, when the people assembled in the Great Mosque for the early matin prayer, Abu Lulû mingled with the front rank of the worshippers. Omar entered, and, as was customary with the Imâm who led the prayers, took his

[1] Moghîra, when recently appointed to Kûfa, may have left him at Medîna; or, more likely, he may have accompanied his master from Kûfa to the Hejâz, it being the season of pilgrimage when the governors presented themselves.

[2] The following story is told even by the earliest authorities:—Kâb (the converted Jewish doctor, of whom mention has been made already) came to the Caliph and said, 'Omar, thou hast but three days to live.' 'Strange,' said Omar, 'for I feel quite well and strong.' 'Nevertheless,' continued Kâb, 'thus and thus I find it foretold in the Towrât.' Next day he came again, and told Omar he had but two days left. After he was struck down, Kâb came to visit him, and Omar said, on this occasion, to those about him,—'Kâb spake the truth,' adding this couplet—

> Kâb warned me that in three days I should die; in the prophecy of Kâb there is no doubt;
> I fear not death; and verily I am dying; but the fear of the wolf followeth in its wake.

For *wolf* (zeib) some read *sin* (zanb). It is difficult to say what can have given rise to this strange tradition. Possibly Kâb, seeing the sullen and threatening attitude of Abu Lulû, may have warned him accordingly.

stand in advance of the congregation, having his back towards them. He had no sooner called out the first words, *Allah Akbar*, than Abu Lulû rushed upon him, and with a sharp blade inflicted six wounds in different parts of his body. Then he ran wildly about, killing some and wounding others, and at last stabbed himself to death. Omar, who had fallen to the ground, was borne into his house, which adjoined the Mosque, sufficiently composed to desire that Abd al Rahmân should proceed with the service. When it was ended, Omar summoned him to his bedside, and signified his intention of nominating him to the Caliphate. 'Is this obligatory upon me?' inquired Abd al Rahmân. 'Nay, by the Lord!' said Omar, 'thou art free.' 'That being so,' he replied, 'I never will accept the burden.'[1] 'Then stanch my wound,' said the dying Caliph (for life was ebbing fast through a great gash below the navel), 'and stay me while I commit my trust unto a company of men that were faithful unto their Prophet, and with whom their Prophet was well pleased.' So he named, together with Abd al Rahmân, other four, namely Aly, Othmân, Zobeir, and Sád, as the chiefest among the Companions of Mahomet, to be the electors of his successor, and called them to his bedside. When they appeared, he proceeded thus:—'Wait for your brother Talha (who was absent for the moment from Medîna) three days; if he arrive, take him for the sixth; if not, ye are to decide the matter between you.' Then, addressing each in turn, he warned them of the grave responsibility attaching to their office as Electors, and the danger to the elected one of favouring unduly his own clan and family. 'O Aly, if the choice fall upon thee, see that thou exalt not the Beni Hâshim above their fellows. And thou, Othmân, if thou art elected,

Omar appoints Electors to choose successor.

[1] It is possible that Abd al Rahmân's subsequent renunciation of the Caliphate in the coming conclave may have led to the tradition of this supposed conversation with Omar; but I give the tradition as I find it; and the facts as stated in the text are not in themselves improbable.

or Sád, beware that thou set not thy kinsmen over the necks of men. Arise, go forth, deliberate and then decide. Meanwhile Soheib shall lead the public prayers.'[1] When they had departed, he called Abu Talha, a warrior of note, to him:[2] 'Go, stand,' he said, 'before their door, and suffer no man to enter in unto them.' After a while he proceeded solemnly, addressing those around him:—'To him who shall succeed, give it as my dying bequest that he be kind to the Men of this city, which gave a home to us and to the Faith; that he make much of their virtues, and pass lightly by their faults. And bid him treat well the Arab tribes, for verily they are the backbone of Islam; the tithe that he taketh from them, let him give it back unto the same for the nourishment of their poor. And the Jews and Christians, let him faithfully fulfil the covenant of the Prophet with them.[3] O Lord, I have finished my course. And now to him that cometh after me I leave the kingdom and the Caliphate firmly stablished and at peace.' Then he lay down quietly and rested for a time.

Omar desires to be interred beside the Prophet.

After a while he bade his son go forth, and see who it was that had wounded him. Being told that it was Abu Lulû, he exclaimed:—'Praise be to the Lord that it was not one who had ever bowed down before Him, even once, in prayer! Now, Abdallah, my son, go in unto Ayesha, and

[1] The selection of Soheib was, no doubt, made advisedly. It will be remembered that Mahomet is thought to have, in a manner, pointed out Abu Bekr as his successor by nominating him, when he was himself laid aside, to preside at the public prayers. Soheib had, of course, no pretensions to the office. He had been a slave at Mecca, but was much revered because of his early conversion (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 72). So his appointment on this occasion was very suitable.

[2] A stalwart warrior. Mahomet used to say that in the field, the voice of Abu Talha was better than a thousand men. At Honein he slew twenty of the enemy with his own hand.

[3] Some traditions omit the words 'Jews and Christians,' giving thus to the sentence a general bearing; but the mention of *covenant* or *treaties* would seem to imply that tribes or people were meant other than Mahometans; and the best supported traditions are as in the text.

ask her leave that I be buried in her chamber by the side of the Prophet, and by the side of Abu Bekr. If she refuse, then bury me by the other Moslems, in the graveyard of Backî.[1] And list thee, Abdallah, if they disagree' (for he too was to have a voice in the election) 'then be thou with the majority; or, if the votes be equal, then choose thou that side on which is Abd al Rahmân. Now let the people come in.' Crowds had assembled at the door; and, permission having been given, they approached to make obeisance. As they passed in and out, Omar asked whether any leading man had joined in conspiring against him. 'The Lord forbid!' was the loud response of all, in horror at the very word.

Omar's death.

Among the rest, Aly came forward to inquire; and as he sat by the bedside, the son of Abbâs came up. Omar, who dreaded the factious spirit of the latter, said: 'O Ibn Abbâs, art thou with me in this matter?' He signified assent, whereupon Omar added earnestly: 'See that thou deceive me not, thou and thy fellows.[2] Now, Abdallah, my son, raise up my head from the pillow, and then lay it gently on the ground:[3] peradventure the Lord may in mercy take me thus, this night, for I fear the horrors of the rising sun.' A physician gave him to drink of date-water; but it oozed through the wound unchanged; and so also with a draught of milk. Which when the physician saw, he said: 'I perceive that the wound is mortal: make now thy testament, O

[1] Backî al Gharcad. For this burying-ground, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. 208.

[2] There is the tradition of a long conversation between Ibn Abbâs and Omar, in which the former pressed the *right* of his family to the Caliphate; and Omar answered, attributing the claim to envy. The whole is a mere Abbasside invention; for neither Aly nor Abbâs, nor any one of the house of Hâshim, seems even to have dreamed of any such pretension till after the dissensions which broke out after Omar's death. *Fâtima* was the only discontented person, and that, as we have seen, was about the property left by the Prophet withheld from her by Abu Bekr, not about any claim to the Caliphate.

[3] As in the Oriental style, the bed, or matting, was spread upon the ground, Abdallah had but to raise his father's head and remove it outside the pillow; so placing it on the ground, and afterwards raising it upon his lap.

Commander of the Faithful.' 'That,' said Omar, 'have I done already.' As he lay, his head resting on the bosom of his son, he recited this couplet:—

> It had gone hard with my soul, if I had not been a Moslem;
> But verily all the appointed prayers have I observed, and fasted.

And so, in a low voice, he kept repeating the name of the Lord, and the short Moslem creed, until his spirit passed away. It was the 26th of Dzul Hijj, the 23rd year of the Hegira. He had reigned for the space of ten years and a half.[1] Nov. 3, A.D. 644.

So died Omar, next to the Prophet the greatest in the kingdom of Islam; for it was all within these ten years that, by his wisdom, patience, and vigour, the dominion was achieved over Syria, Egypt, and Persia, which Islam has ever since maintained. Abu Bekr beat down the apostate tribes; but at his death the armies of Islam had but just crossed the Syrian frontier. Omar began his reign the master only of Arabia. He died the Caliph of an empire embracing Persia, Egypt, and some of the fairest provinces of the Byzantine throne. Yet throughout this marvellous fortune he never lost the equipoise of a wise and sober judgment, nor exalted himself above the frugal and familiar style of the Arab Chief. 'Where is the Caliph?' would the visitor from distant provinces inquire, as he looked around the court of the Great Mosque; and all the while the monarch sat in homely guise before him. Achievements of his Caliphate

The features of Omar's life it requires but few lines to sketch. Simplicity and duty were his guiding principles. Impartiality and devotion characterised the discharge of his great office; and the responsibility so weighed upon him Character of Omar.

[1] Some traditions give the date of his death three days later, i.e. on the last day of Dzul Hijj. This, no doubt, arises from that having been the date on which the new Caliph was chosen, and Omar's reign is conventionally spoken of as also lasting up to that day—the last day of the year A.H. 23. There is another tradition that he was wounded on Wednesday, 23rd of Dzul Hijj, and buried on the Sunday following, i.e. on the 27th.

that at times he would exclaim, 'O that my mother had not borne me; would that I had been this stalk of grass instead!' Of a fiery and impatient temper, he was noted in his youth, and even during the later days of the Prophet's life, as the stern advocate of vengeance. Ever ready to unsheathe the sword, it was he who, after the battle of Bedr, advised that the prisoners should all be put to death. But age, as well as weight of office, had mellowed the asperity of his nature.[1] His sense of justice was strong. And excepting the treatment of Khâlid, whom he pursued with an ungenerous resentment, no act of tyranny or injustice is recorded against him; and even in this matter his enmity took its rise in Khâlid's unscrupulous treatment of a fallen foe. The choice of his captains and governors was free from favouritism; and (the appointment of Moghîra and Ammâr excepted) singularly fortunate. The different tribes and bodies in the empire, representing interests the most diverse, reposed in his integrity the utmost confidence, and his strong arm maintained the discipline of law and empire. A certain weakness is discernible in his change of governors at the factious seats of Bussorah and Kûfa. But even so, the conflicting claims of Bedouin and Coreish were kept by him in check, and never dared to disturb Islam till he had passed away. The more distinguished of the Companions he kept around him at Medîna, partly, no doubt, to strengthen his counsels, and partly (as he would say) from unwillingness to lower their dignity by placing them in an office subordinate to himself.[2] Whip in hand, he perambulated the streets and

[1] Bilâl used to say that the only way to soothe Omar, when in a rage, was to recite in his hearing passages from the Corân, which invariably assuaged his wrath. This may, perhaps, have reference to the period of his conversion, when having struck his sister, and made blood to flow, he was moved to repentance by the reading of a Sura. (See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 96.)

[2] Such were Abd al Rahmân, Zobeir, Othmân, Aly, and Talha. The tradition as given by the Secretary of Wackîdy (fol. 235) may also mean that he was unwilling to sully their name by subjecting them to the sordid surroundings and associations of provincial government.

markets of Medîna, ready to punish the offenders on the spot; and it became a proverb,—'Omar's whip is more terrible than another's sword.' But with all this he was tender-hearted, and numberless acts of kindness are recorded, such as relieving the wants of the widow and the fatherless.[1]

The first called Commander of the Faithful.

Omar was the first who assumed the title Ameer al Momenîn, or 'Commander of the Faithful.' *Caliph* (Successor) *of the Prophet of the Lord*, was, he said, 'too long and cumbersome a name, while the other was easier and more fit for common use.'

Burial of Omar.

According to his desire, Omar was buried side by side with the Prophet and Abu Bekr, in the chamber of Ayesha. Soheib, as presiding over the public prayers, performed the funeral service, and the five Electors, with Abdallah, the Caliph's son, lowered the body into its last resting-place.

Faction and schism in prospect.

The Moslem annalist may well sigh as he bids farewell to the strong and single-minded Caliph; and enters on the troubled sea of self-seeking faction, strife, and schism, which opens with the Caliphate of his successor.

[1] Thus, for example, while journeying in Arabia in the year of famine, he came upon a poor woman, seated, with her hungry and weeping children, round a fire, whereon was an empty pot. Omar ran on to the next village, procured bread and meat, filled the pot, and cooked an ample meal; leaving the little ones laughing and at play.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ELECTION OF OTHMAN.

DZUL HIJJ, A.H. XXIII.—MOHARRAM, A.H. XXIX.
NOVEMBER, A.D. 644.

The Electors.

WHAT arrangement Omar might have made for a successor, had his end come less suddenly upon him, it is perhaps unnecessary to inquire. But some more definite choice he would, in all probability, have signified. We know that the perils of disunion hung heavily on his mind. The unbridled arrogance of the numerous powerful tribes settled in Kûfa and Bussorah, flushed with the glory and the spoils of war, was already felt a danger; while family rivalries amongst the Coreish themselves were beginning to weaken their hold over the people which had hitherto been absolute. So much is plain, that (Abd al Rahmân perhaps excepted) Omar saw none amongst them endowed with sufficient power and influence, after his death, to hold the reins of government. There was none, at least, so prominent as to take the acknowledged lead. Again, the mode of nomination or election proper to Islam, was as yet all uncertain. Abu Bekr had on his death-bed named Omar his successor; but the higher precedent of Mahomet, who appointed no one to take his place, but simply named Abu Bekr, when he fell sick, to lead the prayers, was doubtful. Had Abu Obeida been yet alive, Omar declared that he would have chosen him; and the succession now offered to Abd al Rahmân was (as we have seen) declined. Weak and faint from the assassin's dagger, the emergency came upon the dying Caliph altogether unprepared to meet it. So, relieving himself of the responsi-

bility, he fell upon the expedient of nominating the six chiefest Companions, on one or other of whom he knew that the choice must needs fall, to be the Electors of a successor from amongst themselves. These were Abd al Rahmân, Othmân, Aly, Sád, Zobeir, and Talha. A seventh was added in the person of his son Abdallah, who, himself excluded from election,[1] was (in case the conclave were divided) to have the casting vote; and this his father desired him to give on whichever side Abd al Rahmân might be. Talha was absent, and did not return until the election had been made.

Character of the Electors.

Omar hoped, no doubt, that the Successor thus chosen would be strong in the support of his Electors. But he had not calculated on the frailty of human nature; and selfish ends proved more powerful than loyalty to Islam. Abd al Rahmân was the only real patriot amongst them. Talha, Zobeir, and Sád, not yet beyond the age of fifty, had none of them any special reason to aspire to the Caliphate. They were all warriors of renown. Zobeir was closely related to the Prophet. Sád was the nephew of Mahomet's mother; but his recall from Kûfa (although Omar had declared it to involve no discredit) could not but in some measure tarnish the fame of the conqueror of Medâin. Aly, a few years younger, had by far the strongest claims of kinship (whatever these might be); for he was at once the son of Mahomet's uncle, the widowed husband of Fâtima, and the father of the Prophet's only surviving grandsons. He had hitherto, from his inactive temperament, remained passive at the Caliph's court; but, possessed of a quick and high intelligence, he had ever held a distinguished place in the counsels

[1] When some one proposed his son Abdallah, Omar was angry and declared that the government had been long enough in his family. 'Besides' (alluding apparently to some scandal in his domestic life) 'how could I appoint a man who was so weak as not to divorce his wife?' They say, also, that Omar once praised Sâlim, the freedman of Hodzeifa, slain at Yemâma, as one who would have been fit for the Caliphate—'a man beloved of the Prophet, and a lover of the Lord.' But this could only have been as a mere figure of speech.

of Omar. The time was now come, when, in the absence of any leading competitor, his claims could no longer fail to be recognised by those around him; or, without want of spirit, to be asserted by himself. Othmân was the only real rival. His years carried weight, for he was now close on seventy. Handsome and attractive in person and carriage, he gained the hand of Rockeya, the Prophet's daughter. She died while the battle of Bedr was being fought. Shortly after, he married her sister Omm Kolthûm; and when she, too, died, Mahomet used to say he loved Othmân so dearly that, if another daughter had remained, he would have given her also to him. But with all this, his character had vital defects. Of a close and selfish disposition, his will was soft and yielding. And of all the competitors, Othmân probably had the least capacity for dominating the unruly elements of the Moslem empire.

Electors' conclave. Three days' fruitless discussion.

The Electors, when appointed by Omar, retired at once to an adjoining chamber, and forthwith fell into such loud and hot discussion, that Abdallah exclaimed, 'Good heavens! all this tumult, and my father still alive!' Omar, overhearing it, desired that they should wait till his decease, and then again assemble. So after his death and burial, Miedâd, a veteran citizen appointed by the deceased Caliph to the duty, gathered the Electors in the treasury chamber attached to Ayesha's house, Abu Talha keeping watch at the door with a guard of fifty men.[1] Omar's order was that the choice should not be delayed beyond the third day, so that his successor might be declared by the fourth at latest; and he signified the urgency of the business in the empire's interest, by saying that if the

[1] Others say that the conclave was held in the house of Miswar, a citizen of Medina; and that there Abd al Rahmân spent the last decisive night in separate conference with Aly and then with Othmân. For Miedâd, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. 239. Moghîra and Amru are characteristically said to have sat at the door of the house to make it appear as if they, too, had had a hand in the election. Amru had probably come to Medîna with the other governors on pilgrimage.

minority then resisted, they should be beheaded on the spot. When the Electors came together, each pressed hotly the claim of his own party, and two days were wasted in unprofitable wrangling. Abd al Rahmân spent his nights in visiting the leading citizens, and the governors and chief men from the provinces (who, having come for the yearly pilgrimage, had not yet departed to their several posts) and in sounding their views. On the third day, Abu Talha warned the Electors that he would allow no further delay, and that the decision must be come to by the following morning. To bring the matter, therefore, to an issue, Abd al Rahmân offered to forego his own claim to the Caliphate, if only the rest would abide by his decision. They all agreed but Aly, who at first was silent. At last Aly said: 'First give me thy word that thou wilt not regard kith nor kin, but the right alone and the people's weal.' 'And I,' rejoined Abd al Rahmân, 'ask thee first to give me thy troth that thou wilt abide by my choice, and against all dissentients wilt support the same.' Aly assented, and thus the matter rested in the hands of Abd al Rahmân.

Abd al Rahmân acts as Umpire.

That night Abd al Rahmân did not close his eyes. The contest was narrowed between the houses of Hâshim and Omeyya, in the persons of Aly and Othmân, and their influence with the electoral body was fairly equal.[1] Abd al

[1] For the two rival families see *Life of Mahomet*, pp. xx. and xxviii. The Electors were, in reality, selected very evenly. Zobeir was cousin to Aly both on the father's side and the mother's. Sád and Abd al Rahmân belonged to the Beni Zohra, a distant branch of Coreishite descent. Sád, however, was likewise the nephew of Mahomet's mother, Amina. Some say that he voted for Othmân; others that, being pressed by Aly, he went over to his side. Talha was of the Beni Taym, the clan of Abu Bekr. The impartiality of Abd al Rahmân is impugned by the partisans of Aly, as being the brother-in-law of Othmân, whose uterine sister he married; and this probably was the relationship hinted at by Aly in his appeal to Abd al Rahmân.

We are getting now into the full flood of Abbasside tradition, which becomes entirely partisan and untrustworthy, with the view of exalting the claims of the Prophet's family and defaming the Omeyyads. Of this class of traditions is the following:—Aly complained to Abbâs that he was sure to be outvoted in the conclave because Sád would go with his kinsman Abd al Rahmân, and vote for Othmân, brother-in-law of the latter; and that then, the votes being equally

Rahmân was closeted with each of the Electors alone in turn. Zobeir was in favour of Aly; how Sád voted is not certain. With Aly and Othmân, separately, Abd al Rahmân was long in secret conference. Each pressed his own claim; but each also admitted the claim of the other to be the next in weight to his own. The morning broke upon them thus engaged; and now the nomination must be made.

Othmân elected Caliph.

The Great Mosque overflowed with expectant worshippers, who crowded in unusual number to the morning service. Abd al Rahmân addressed them thus:—'The people think that the governors, chiefs, and captains should, without further waiting, return to their respective posts. Wherefore advise me now in this matter.' Ammâr, the late governor of Kûfa, said: 'If it be thy desire that there be no division in the land, then salute Aly, Caliph!' and Micdâd affirmed the same. 'Nay,' cried Abu Sarh, 'if it be thy desire that there be no division, then salute Othmân!' and Abu Rabia affirmed the same. Ammâr turned contemptuously on Abu Sarh; who, repaying scorn with scorn, said: 'And pray, Ammâr, how long hast thou been counsellor to the Moslems? Let the Beni Hâshim and Omeyya speak for themselves.' But Ammâr would not be silent, and, continuing to press the claims of Aly, asked why the government should pass away from the Prophet's line. Whereupon one of the Beni Makhzûm (a Coreishite tribe) cried angrily: 'Thou passest beyond thy bounds, O son of Sommeyya; who art thou, thus to counsel the Coreish?'[1] Sád, seeing that the strife was

divided, Abd al Rahmân would have the casting-vote. On this Abbâs reproached Aly for having neglected the advice, given by him now and on former occasions, to claim the Caliphate *as his right*, and to have nothing to do with electors or arbitration. He had told him years before to demand the Caliphate from Mahomet, and he had neglected to do so. 'And now,' said Abbâs, 'the Caliphate will leave our family for ever.' All this is patent fabrication.

[1] The Beni Makhzum was a powerful branch of the Coreish, but far removed by descent from the clan of Hâshim, and having little sympathy with it. It was Khâlid's tribe. To understand the taunts here bandied, it must be remembered that Abu Sarh (his proper name is Abdallah Ibn Abu Sarh) was the foster-brother of Othmân, and bore a bad repute (as we shall see below) as having deceived Mahomet, and been proscribed at the capture of Mecca.

waxing warm, said to Abd al Rahmân: 'Finish thy work at once, or the flames of discord will burst forth.' 'Silence, ye people!' cried Abd al Rahmân—'Be quiet, or ye will bring evil upon yourselves. The determination of this matter resteth with me.' So saying, he called Aly to the front, and thus addressed him: 'Dost thou bind thyself by the covenant of the Lord, to do all according to the Book of the Lord, the example of the Prophet, and the precedent of his Successors?' 'I hope,' responded Aly, 'that I should do so; I will act according to the best of my knowledge and ability.' Then he put the same question to Othmân, who answered unconditionally,—'Yea, I will.' Whereupon, either dissatisfied with Aly's hesitating answer, or having already decided in his mind against him, Abd al Rahmân raised his face toward heaven, and taking Othmân by the hand, prayed thus aloud:—'O Lord, do thou hearken now and bear me witness. Verily the burden that is around my neck, the same I place around the neck of Othmân.' So saying, he saluted him as Caliph, and all the people followed his example.

Othmân's inaugural address, 3d Moharram, A.H. XXIV. Nov. 7, A.D. 644.

It was the first day of the new year, the twenty-fourth of the Hegira. After receiving the homage of the people, a process in which two or three days were occupied, Othmân ascended the pulpit, and made a brief and modest speech.[1] 'The first attempt,' he said, 'was always difficult, for he was unused to speak in public. It would be his duty in the future to address them, and the Lord would teach him.'

Aly swears allegiance.

Though Aly, like the rest, took the oath of allegiance to Othmân, yet his party were much displeased, and he himself upbraided Abd al Rahmân bitterly with the desire to keep the supreme power out of the Prophet's house and brotherhood. 'Beware,' said Abd al Rahmân, with a prophetic

Ammâr (as has been stated before) was son of a bond-woman called Sommeyya. See on the tradition of her martyrdom, *Life of Mahomet* (1st ed.), vol. ii. p. 126.

[1] The inaugural address was delivered on the 3rd Moharram or Nov. 10, the interval between the election and speech at installation being presumably taken up in receiving the oath of allegiance from all present at Medina.

warning: 'take heed lest, thus speaking, thou makest not a way against thyself, whereof thou shalt repent hereafter.' And so Aly passed out with the words of Joseph on his lips; 'Surely patience becometh me. The Lord is my helper against that which ye devise.'[1] Shortly after, Talha returned to Medîna. Othmân acquainted him with what had happened. As his vote would have ruled the majority, Othmân declared that if he dissented, he was prepared even then to resign the Caliphate. But on learning that all the people had agreed, Talha also swore allegiance.

The choice unfortunate for Islam; but made in good faith.

The choice of Abd al Rahmân laid the seeds of disaster for Islam at large, and for the Caliphate in particular. It led to dissensions which for years bathed the Moslem world in blood, threatened the very existence of the faith, and to this day divide believers in a hopeless and embittered schism. But Abd al Rahmân could hardly have anticipated the wanton, weak, and wavering policy of Othmân which slowly but surely brought such results about. There is no reason to think that, in discharging his functions as Umpire, he acted otherwise than loyally and for the best.[2]

An embarrassing incident followed immediately on the

[1] Quoted from the Corân, Sura xii. v. 19.

[2] His attitude in discharging the invidious task was that of a loyal and unselfish patriot. He disclaimed the Caliphate for himself. Night and day engaged unceasingly in canvassing the sentiments of the leading chiefs, he did his best to compose the antagonistic claims of the selfish Electors. What was the immediate cause of his action when in the Mosque he nominated Othmân, it is not possible to say. Abbasside traditions assume that the cause was the conscientious scruples of Aly in hesitating to swear that he would follow strictly the precedents of Abu Bekr and of Omar in his conduct of the Caliphate. The Corân and the precedent of Mahomet he would implicitly obey, but the precedent of the first Caliphs only so far as he agreed in the same. In the tenor of the traditions relating how Abd al Rahmân first questioned Aly and then Othmân, and in their replies, I hardly find sufficient ground for this assumption; and it looks very much of a piece with the Abbasside fabrications of the day. One tradition ascribes the hesitancy of Aly to the cunning counsel of Amru, who, beforehand, advised him not to give a direct reply, lest Abd al Rahmân should think him too grasping; while he advised Othmân to answer unconditionally—as if Aly were so simple as to have been caught by such transparent guile.

accession of Othmân. Some one told Obeidallah, son of the deceased Caliph, that Abu Lulû had been seen some days before in private converse with Hormuzân the Persian prince, and with a Christian slave belonging to Sád; and that when surprised the three separated, dropping a poniard such as that with which the assassin had wounded Omar. Rashly assuming a conspiracy, the infuriated son rushed with drawn sword to avenge his father's death, and slew both the prince and the slave. Sád, incensed at the loss of his slave, seized Obeidallah, still reeking with his victims' blood, and carried him, as the murderer of a believer (for Hormuzân had professed the Moslem faith) before the Caliph.

Murder of Hormuzân, and affair of Omar's son.

A council was called. There was not a tittle of evidence, or presumption even, against the prince. Aly delivered his opinion that, according to the law of God, Obeidallah must be put to death, as having slain a believer without due cause. Others were shocked at the proposal:—'But yesterday,' they said, 'the Commander of the Faithful was slain, and to-day thou wilt put his son to death!' Moved by the appeal, Othmân assumed the responsibility of naming a money compensation in lieu of blood, and this he paid himself. Some feeling was excited, and people said that the Caliph was already departing from the strict letter of the law. Ziâd ibn Lebîd, a poet of Medîna, satirised both the murderer and the Caliph who had let him off, in stinging verse. But he was silenced; the matter dropped, and there is no reason to think that in the end Othmân's action was generally disapproved.[1]

One of the first acts by which Othmân signalised his accession was to increase the stipends of the chief men all round, by the addition to each of one hundred dirhems. The act, no doubt, was popular, but it gave promise of extravagance in the new administration.

Othmân increases stipends.

[1] Aly, however, maintained his view, and sought, when he became Caliph, to give practical effect to it. He searched for Obeidallah, and would, we are told, have put him to death. But Obeidallah made his escape to Syria, where he was safe under the rule of Muâvia.

CHAPTER XXX.

CALIPHATE OF OTHMAN. GENERAL REVIEW.

A.H. XXIV.—XXXV. A.D. 645–656.

Dynastic issues of the Caliphate.

HAVING now traced the progress of Islâm to its firm establishment in the world, I do not propose to pursue the history of its conquests and further spread, otherwise than in a very brief and general way; but shall confine what remains of this work chiefly to a review of the facts bearing on the dynastic issues of the Caliphate.

Causes of Othmân's unpopularity:

The reign of Othmân lasted twelve years. It is usual to say that the first six were popular, and the last six the reverse; that is to say, that, during the latter half, the tide turned, and, discontent ripening into sedition, the storm burst at length with fatal force upon the aged Caliph. This is true if we look at the outward appearance. But in reality the causes of unpopularity were busily at work from the very beginning. These were twofold: *first*, antagonism between the Arab nation at large and the Coreish; *secondly*, jealousy between the house of Hâshim, and that of Abd Shems (the Omeyyads) to which Othmân and Muâvia belonged.

I. Antagonism between Arab tribes at large and Coreish.

The Arab soldiery, flushed with the glory and the fruits of victory, were scattered all over the empire. In Syria, they were held in check by the powerful hand of Muâvia, whose authority was strengthened by the larger settlement there than elsewhere of influential citizens from Mecca and Medîna. In every other province, conscious of their power, the Arab tribes were rapidly getting the bit between their teeth. Their arrogant and factious spirit found its focus at Kûfa and Bussorah

in both of which cities, indeed, it had already ominously shown itself during the reign of Omar; for even he had not been able effectually to curb it there. Impatience of control on the part of the Arabs was based partly on the spread of Islam having been due to the prowess of their arms; and partly on the brotherhood of the faith, in virtue of which all believers, and specially those of Arab blood, stood on the common ground of civil equality. The Caliph, it is true, as successor to the Prophet, was absolute, uncontrolled by any constitutional authority whatever. But even he, yielding to the sentiment, not only took counsel on all critical occasions with the leading men around him, but, as a rule, held himself bound by the popular voice at large, and enjoined the same upon his lieutenants in the provinces. And so it was that in the recall of Sád, the arraigning of Abu Mûsa, and other concessions to the clamour of the citizens of Bussorah and Kûfa, Omar had already set a baneful lesson to his successor, and given to those constituencies a foretaste of power which they were not slow to take advantage of. Thus the turbulent spirit grew from day to day—a spirit of opposition to all authority, and of impatience in particular of the pretensions of the Coreish.

II. Aly and the house of Hâshim jealous of Othmân and the house of Omeyya.

The second cause, though less threatening to Islam, was more insidious, and fraught with greater danger to the Caliphate and the person of Othmân himself. Had the Coreish rallied loyally around the throne, the Arab factions might have been nipped in the bud. But the weakness of Othmân, and the partiality with which he favoured his own friends and relatives, stirred the jealousy of the house of Hâshim, which began vaunting the claims of Aly and the Prophet's family, and depreciating the Omeyyad branch to which the Caliph belonged. That branch, unfortunately for the Omeyyads, had been the tardiest to recognise the mission of Mahomet; and the kinsmen on whom Othmân now lavished his favours had been the most inveterate in their opposition

to it. Every unfavourable expression uttered by the Prophet during that period of bitter enmity was now raked up against them, and used to blacken their names, and to cast discredit on a government which promoted them to power and honour. Thus the Coreish were divided; rivalry paralysed their influence, and Othmân lost the support which would otherwise have enabled him to check the machinations of the Arab malcontents. Still worse, Aly and his party lent themselves to the disloyal policy of the Bedouin faction, which was fast sapping the foundations of the Caliphate, and which, as Aly should have foreseen, would in the end recoil against himself.[1]

Factious spirit diverted by military service.

It was not, however, till the later part of Othmân's reign that these influences, though early at work, assumed dangerous prominence. Their retardation was in great measure due to the military operations, which, busily pursued in all directions by the Moslem arms, diverted attention from domestic trouble. Campaigns were annually prosecuted, with more or less vigour, throughout the twelve years of Othmân's Caliphate. A very brief outline of them will suffice.

Operations in *Persia*.

In Persia, as we have seen, the Mussulman invasion had resulted hitherto rather in the dispersion of great armies than in the effectual reduction of the country. Most of the provinces resented the first imposition of tribute, and rose against their new masters, one after another, in repeated and sometimes long-continued rebellion. Expeditions were time after time equipped from Kûfa and Bussorah to crush these risings, from the Caspian Sea and the Oxus to the shores of the Indian Ocean, and even as far as Kâbul.[2] It was not

[1] From this point begin the rough waters of the great cataclysm. Tradition becomes deeply affected by faction, especially the envenomed shafts of the party of Aly and the Abbassides, under cover of which they built up their pretensions, and, in the end, succeeded in supplanting the Omeyyad dynasty. The evidence, therefore, must be received with caution as we go along.

[2] Kâbul is said to have been first attacked A.H. 24. The early Moslems

till near the close of Othmân's reign that the Moslem yoke was firmly settled on the neck of Persia. In the eighth year of his Caliphate, Yezdegird died; and thereafter, though in a desultory and sporadic fashion opposition might still survive, anything like national or dynastic antagonism was at an end. Success, indeed, did not invariably attend the Moslem arms. The progress, on the whole, was steadily forward; but there were reverses, and these sometimes of a serious type. In the year A.H. 32, the Turks on the western shore of the Caspian had an advantage, in which the Arab leaders and a great body of the veterans were slain. To retrieve the disaster, Othmân ordered levies from Syria to cross Mesopotamia and reinforce the Kûfan army. Bad blood bred between the two; the Syrians refused to serve under the captain of the rival body; and an altercation ensued which nearly led to bloodshed. This, adds the historian, was the first symptom of the breach between the Kûfans and the men of Syria, which subsequently broke out into prolonged hostilities. About the same time, a whole army was lost in deep snow upon the heights of Kermân, only two men escaping to tell the tale. There were also very serious reverses in Turkestan. But Arabia continued to cast forth its swarms of fighting tribes in such vast numbers, and the wild fanaticism of the faith still rolled so rapidly onward, that these and similar disasters soon disappeared in the swelling tide of conquest.

A.H. XXXI. A.D. 652.

Excepting raids of little import, Syria had for some time past enjoyed rest,[1] when suddenly in the second year of this Caliphate, Muâvia was startled by the approach of an army from Asia Minor, which he had not the means to oppose.

Syria, Asia Minor, and *Armenia*. A.H. XXV A.D. 646.

seem to have been as unfortunate (perhaps as unwise) as ourselves in their expeditions against Afghanistan, where they met with many sad reverses.

[1] Ascalon is said to have been reduced (apparently for the first time) just before Omar's death, A.H. 23; but the delay was purely owing to its maritime position. This excepted, Syria had for some years been under the firm yoke of Islam.

Othmân ordered troops to pass over from the eastern provinces, and eight thousand volunteers soon joined the Syrian army. Thus reinforced, the Arabs repulsed the Byzantine attack. Following up their success, they overran Asia Minor, and, piercing the heart of Armenia, joined their comrades on the Persian border within sight of the Caspian. Thence they penetrated as far north as Tiflis, and even to the shores of the Black Sea. Thereafter hostilities were renewed for a long period every summer; and eventually, aided by naval expeditions from the ports of Africa, the Syrian generals pushed forward their conquests in the Levant and Asia Minor, enlarged their coasts, and strengthened their border.

Africa. A.H. XXV. A.D. 646.

In Africa, I have already noticed the desperate attack made early in the reign of Othmân on Alexandria from seaward. The Byzantine forces, for a little while, regained possession of the city, but (as we have before related) were finally driven out by Amru; and against the Moslem power in Egypt no further attack was made. The Imperial arms, however, were still active in Africa; and along the northern shores of the Mediterranean, strong Arab columns were long actively engaged. Among the chiefs who had joined the Egyptian army was Abu Sarh,[1] already noticed as the foster-brother of Othmân. He did not bear an enviable reputation in Islam; for having been employed by Mahomet as amanuensis to record his early revelations, he had proved in some way unfaithful to the trust; and on the capture of Mecca, was in consequence proscribed from the amnesty, and only at the intercession of Othmân escaped being put to death. Possessed of administrative ability, he had been appointed by Omar to the government of Upper Egypt. But some years after, he fell out with Amru, in whom was vested the supreme control of the province; and each appealed to Othmân. Amru was

Abu Sarh supersedes Amru in Upper Egypt. A.H. XXVI. A.D. 647.

[1] For his full name (Abdallah ibn Sád ibn Abu Sarh), see note at p. 290; but it may conveniently be abbreviated into Abu Sarh.

declared to be in fault, and the Caliph deposed him altogether from the civil charge of Egypt. Amru objected. 'To be over the army,' he said, 'and not over the revenue, was but holding the cow's horns, while another milked her.' He repaired angrily to Othmân, who, after some words of bitter altercation, transferred the entire administration, civil and military, into the hands of Abu Sarh. The act was unfortunate for the Caliph. It threw Amru into the ranks of the disaffected party at Medîna; while the bad repute of 'the renegade' Abu Sarh, though he was an able warrior, gave point to the charges of partiality and nepotism now rife against Othmân.[1]

Conquest in Northern Africa. A.H. XXVI. A.D. 647.

Abu Sarh, left thus in sole command, carried his arms vigorously along the coast beyond Tripoli and Barca, and threatened Carthage and the far west. The Byzantine Governor, Gregory, reinforced by the Emperor, advanced against him with an army, we are told, of one hundred and twenty thousand men. Othmân, warned of the danger, strengthened Abu Sarh by a large contingent of Arab troops; and with them marched a numerous company of veterans and 'Companions,' including the sons of Abu Bekr, of Abbâs, and of Zobeir. The field was long and hotly contested; and Abu Sarh, to stimulate his men, promised the hand of Gregory's daughter, with a large dower, to the warrior who should slay her father. The enemy was at last discomfited with great slaughter, and

[1] Party spirit has, no doubt, been freely used to magnify the offence of Abu Sarh. He is supposed to be the person alluded to in Sura vi. 94:—'Who is more wicked than he who saith, I will produce a Revelation, like unto that which the Lord hath sent down?' Vide Sale's note *in loco*. The circumstances as quoted there are altogether apocryphal. He must, however, have deceived, if not betrayed, Mahomet, in some very marked way, to have led to his proscription on the capture of Mecca—an occasion on which the Prophet treated the inhabitants, with but few exceptions, with mercy and even generosity. See *Life*, p. 425. We have seen above (p. 248) that Omar is said by some to have been dissatisfied with Amru's administration in Egypt—so much so, as to have superseded him partially by appointing Abu Sarh to the command in Upper Egypt. The evidence of Omar's disapproval of Amru is imperfect, but there is no doubt that he appointed Abu Sarh to Egypt, and that Othmân on his accession found him already in power there.

a citizen of Medîna gained the lady for his prize. He carried her off on his camel to Medîna; and the martial verses which he sang by the way are still preserved.[1] In this campaign, Othmân incurred much odium by granting Abu Sarh a fifth of the royal share of the booty as personal prize. The rest was sent as usual to Medîna; and here again Othmân is blamed for allowing Merwân his cousin to become the purchaser of the same at an inadequate price.[2]

Naval operations forbidden by Omar.

But it is as the first commander of a Moslem fleet that Abu Sarh is chiefly famous, in which capacity he both added largely to the conquests of Islam, and also by his pre-eminence contributed anew to the obloquy cast on his master's name. Muâvia had for a long time keenly missed the support of a fleet, and had sought permission of Omar to embark his soldiery in ships. 'The isles of the Levânt,' he wrote, 'are so close to the Syrian shore, that you might almost hear the barking of the dogs and the cackling of the hens: give me leave to attack them.' But Omar dreaded the sea, and wrote to consult Amru, who answered thus:—'The sea is a boundless expanse, whereon great ships look but tiny specks; there is nought saving the heavens above and the waters beneath; when the wind lulls, the sailor's heart is broken; when tempestuous, his senses reel. Trust it little, fear it much. Man at sea is an insect floating on a splinter, now engulfed, now scared to death.' On receipt of this alarming account, Omar forbade Muâvia to have anything to do with ships. 'The Syrian sea, they tell me, is longer and broader than the dry land, and is instant with the Lord, night and day, seeking to swallow it up. How should I trust my people on the

[1] This is all we are told by Ibn al Athîr. But there is elsewhere a not unlikely tradition that the unhappy maiden, tearing herself from her captor's embrace, leapt from the camel, and found in death an escape from her humiliation. This campaign furnishes plentiful material for many still wilder stories in the romances of the pseudo-Wâckidy and later writers.

[2] According to some authorities, Othmân presented the royal share of the booty as a free gift to Merwân, and they add that this was one of the grounds of Othmân's impeachment. But it reads like a party calumny.

bosom of the cursed infidel? Remember Alâ. Nay, my friend, the safety of my people is dearer to me than all the treasures of Greece.'

But undertaken by Othmân.

Nothing, therefore, was attempted by sea in the reign of Omar. But on his death, Muâvia renewed the petition, and, at his reiterated request, Othmân at last relaxed the ban, on condition that the service should be voluntary. The first fleet equipped against Cyprus, in the twenty-eighth year of the Hegira, was commanded by Abu Cays as admiral; it was joined by Abu Sarh with a complement of ships manned by Egyptians, and carried a body of Arab warriors from Alexandria. Cyprus was taken easily, and a great multitude of captives carried off. The Cypriots agreed to pay the same revenue as they had done to the Emperor; but, unable as yet to guarantee their protection, the Caliph remitted the ordinary poll-tax. Of Abu Cays we are told that he headed fifty expeditions by land and by sea, but was killed at the last, while engaged in exploring a Grecian sea-port.[1]

Cyprus occupied. A.H. XXVIII. A.D. 649.

Naval victory off Alexandria. A.H XXXI. A.D. 652.

Three years after the fall of Cyprus, driven now from the harbours of Africa, and seriously threatened in the Levant, the Byzantines gathered a fleet of five or six hundred vessels of war, and defied the Arabs at sea. Abu Sarh was appointed to take up the challenge. He manned every available ship in the ports of Egypt and Africa; and his squadron, though

[1] Coming there in disguise, he was recognised by a woman, who gave the alarm, and the natives rushed upon the boat. Asked how she recognised the Saracen captain, this woman said, 'He came as a merchantman; but when I asked an alms of him, he gave as a prince giveth; so I knew it was the captain of the Saracens.'

The payment of *jazia*, or poll-tax, implied the corresponding claim of protection. *Zimmy* signifies one who, so assessed, becomes part and parcel of the Moslem empire, and as such entitled to its guardianship. The Cypriots were not expected, from their position, to take any active part on the Moslem side; but they were bound to give their new masters warning of any hostile expedition, and generally to facilitate their naval operations.

As the great crowd of prisoners were being shipped, one of the Moslem warriors wept; for, said he, 'those captives will lead the hearts of their masters astray'—one of the few occasions on which we see a faint perception of the evils of female slavery to the conquerors themselves; for that I take to be the meaning.

much inferior in weight and equipment to the enemy's, was crowded with valiant warriors from the army. The Byzantine fleet came in sight near Alexandria. The wind lulled, and both sides lay for a while at anchor. The night was passed by the Moslems in recitation of the Corân and prayer, while the Greeks kept up the clangour of their bells. In the morning, a fierce engagement took place. The Arab ships grappled with their adversaries, and a hand-to-hand encounter with sword and dagger ensued. The slaughter was great on both sides; but the Greeks, unable to withstand the wild onset of the Saracens, broke and dispersed. Constantine, who had been in command, sailed away to Syracuse, where the people, infuriated at the defeat, despatched him in his bath.[1]

Obloquy cast on Othmân in this affair.

In this expedition, the discontent against Othmân, notwithstanding the splendid victory, for the first time found open and dangerous expression among some of the leading Companions. Mohammed son of Abu Bekr, and Mohammed son of Abu Hodzeifa (afterwards leaders in rebellion), murmured against the Caliph for appointing Abu Sarh admiral. 'Othmân hath changed the ordinances of his predecessors,' they said, 'and made captain of the fleet a man whom the Prophet proscribed, and desired to have put to death; and such like men also hath he put in chief command at Kûfa and Bussorah, and elsewhere.' The clamour reaching the ears of Abu Sarh, he declared that none of these men should fight in his line of battle. Excluded thus from the victory, they were the more incensed. Spite of the threats of Abu Sarh, the inflammatory language spread, and men began to speak openly and unadvisedly against Othmân.[2]

Caliph's outlook darkens.

The clouds were louring, and the horizon of the unfortunate Caliph darkening all around.

[1] According to Theophanes, it was Constans II., grandson of Heraclius, who perished thus for his crimes, but at a later date. See Gibbon, ch. xlviii.

[2] Some authorities make the discontent to arise in consequence of the failure of Abu Sarh to follow up the victory, and give chase to the retiring enemy.

CHAPTER XXXI.

DOMESTIC EVENTS DURING THE CALIPHATE OF OTHMAN. HIS GROWING UNPOPULARITY.

Discontent at Kûfa and Bussorah.

KÛFA and Bussorah at this period exercised an influence on the destinies of Islam hardly less potent than that of the Court of Medîna itself. The turbulent and factious atmosphere of these cities became rapidly and dangerously charged with sentiments of disloyalty and rebellion, and an unwise change of governors aggravated the evil.

Sád reinstated in the government of Kûfa; A.H. XXXIV. A.D. 645,

Moghîra did not long enjoy the power to which the weakness of Omar had raised him. He was removed by Othmân shortly after his accession; and, to fill the vacancy, in obedience (as some say) to the dying wish of Omar, Sád, the conqueror of Medâin, was reinstated in his former office. The issue was again unfortunate. To provide for his luxurious living, Sád, shortly after his appointment, took an advance of money from the chancellor of his treasury, Ibn Masûd; who, by and by, became importunate for its repayment. A heated altercation ensued, and Sád swore angrily at Ibn Masûd. The factious city ranged itself, part with the great warrior, and part with the quondam slave. The quarrel reached the ears of Othmân, who was much displeased, and recalled Sád before he had been a year at Kûfa. As successor, the Caliph appointed Welîd ibn Ocba, a brave warrior, but suspected of intemperance, and withal a uterine brother of his own. To make the choice the more unfortunate, Welîd was son of that Ocba who, when taken prisoner in the battle of Bedr and about to be put to death, exclaimed in

but shortly superseded by Welîd ibn Ocba,

the bitterness of his soul, 'Who will care for my little children?' and was answered by the Prophet, 'Hell-fire!' The words were not forgotten, and faction was careful now to turn them to the worst account. Nevertheless, Welîd was popular; and as, for several years, he directed successive campaigns in the east with gallantry and vigour, he managed thus to divert the restless spirits of his people from discontent at home. But in the end, the unruly populace was too strong for him. A murder took place, and sentence of death was executed at the city gate against three of the culprits.[1] Their relatives resented the act of justice, and lay in wait to find ground of accusation against the governor, whose habits gave them ready opportunity to attain their object. Charges of intemperance were repeatedly laid against him, and as often dismissed by Othmân, because wanting in legal proof. At last his enemies succeeded in detaching from his hand the signet-ring of office while he slept (as they said) from the effects of a debauch, and carried it off in triumph to Medîna. But still worse, it was established that Welîd had on one occasion conducted the morning prayers in such a state of inebriation that, having come to the end of the proper service, he went on, without stopping, to commence another. The scandal was great; and the majesty of Islam must be vindicated. Welîd was recalled to Medîna, scourged according to law, and deposed.[2]

who was deposed for inebriety. A.H. XXX. 651.

[1] See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 235.

[2] Abbasside tales are multiplied against the unfortunate Welîd. He consorted with the poet Abu Zobeid, a converted Christian of the Beni Taghlib, and was suspected of drinking wine in company with him. Another complaint was, that a conjuring Jew from Baghdad having been condemned in Ibn Masûd's court for witchcraft, Jondob, one of the factious leaders, killed him with his own hand instead of waiting the regular course of execution; for which unlawful act Welîd imprisoned Jondob, to the great discontent of the people. Hostile tradition, by deep colouring, has improved on these tales, representing Welîd as a brutal sot and sacrilegist. *E.g.* by his command, the Jew performed works of magic in the sacred precincts of the Great Mosque, assumed by sorcery the form of various animals, cut off a man's head, and then putting it on, brought him to life again, &c. Jondob, scandalised at his devilish tricks, proceeded to cut off the Jew's head, saying, 'If thou canst do

At Bussorah, too, things were going from bad to worse. Abu Mûsa had now been many years governor, when the restless citizens became impatient of his rule. He had been preaching to the pampered soldiery the virtue of enduring hardness as good soldiers of the faith, and therefore of going forth on foot to war. When the next expedition was ready to start, they watched to see whether he would himself set the example. And as his ample baggage issued forth, winding in a long string of mules from the approaches to the castle, they set upon him, crying out, 'Give us of these beasts to ride upon, and walk thou on foot, a pattern of the hardness thou preachest unto us.' Then they repaired to Medîna, and complained that their governor had drained the land of its wealth, pampered the Coreish, and tyrannised over the Arab tribes. Instead of checking with promptitude their petulance and insubordination, Othmân gave it new life by deposing Abu Mûsa on these vague complaints, and appointing an obscure citizen whom they desired, to be their governor. Found unequal to the post, this man was deposed, and a youthful cousin of the Caliph, Ibn Aámir,[1] promoted in his room. When tidings of his nomination reached Bussorah, Abu Mûsa told the people: 'Now ye shall have a tax-gatherer to your hearts' content, rich in cousins, aunts, and uncles; he will flood you with his harpies!' And so, in truth, it turned out;' for he soon filled all the local offices

Abu Mûsa deposed at Bussorah. A.H. XXIX. A.D. 650.

Ibn Aámir appointed governor.

miracles, then bring thyself to life again.' Upon this Welîd imprisoned Jondob, and would have put him to death had he not, by the connivance of the jailor, escaped. These tales are given by Masûdi and later writers, whose tendency to vilify Welîd by the most extravagant fiction, is manifest.

Of the same complexion are the traditions which represent the citizens of Medîna as in such bodily fear of Othmân that no one dared to carry out the sentence of scourging against Welîd; so that Aly, at last, stepped forward, and himself inflicted the stripes. Others say that Aly ordered his son, Hasan, to do so; but he refused, saying, 'The lord of the *hot* is lord also of the *cold*' (*i.e.* the sweets and the bitter of office must go together), and that then Aly compelled a grandson of Abu Tâlib (Mahomet's uncle) to carry out the sentence.

[1] His name was Abdallah, but to distinguish him from the multitude of that name, he is always called Ibn Aámir.

and the commands in Persia with creatures of his own. But in other respects he proved an able ruler, and took a leading part in the struggle now close at hand.

Saîd governor of Kûfa. A.H. XXX. A.D. 651.

The government of Kûfa, vacated by the deposition of Welîd, together with the whole province of Mesopotamia, was conferred by Othmân upon another young and untried kinsman, Saîd ibn al Aás. His father was killed fighting against the Prophet at Bedr; and the boy, thus left an orphan, had been brought up by Omar, and was eventually sent by him to the wars in Syria. Receiving a good account of his breeding and prowess, Omar summoned him to his court, and gave him two Arab maidens to wife.[1] This youth, now promoted to the most critical post in the empire, was not only without experience in the art of governing, but was vainly inflated with the pretensions of the Coreish. Accustomed in Syria to the discipline of Muâvia's rule, he wrote to Othmân, on reaching Kûfa, that license reigned there; that noble birth passed for nothing; and that the Bedouins were away, beyond control, with the bit between their teeth. His final address as governor was a blustering harangue, in which he glibly talked of crushing the sedition and arrogance of the men of Kûfa with a rod of iron. Countenanced by the Caliph in his vain career, he fomented discontent by advancing to invidious distinction the Coreishite nobility, and treating with contumely the great body of the citizens. 'One Coreishite succeedeth another in this government,' they said;—'the last no better than the first. It is but "out of the frying-pan into the fire."' The under-current of faction gained daily in strength and volume. But the vigorous campaigns of Saîd in northern Persia, for he was an active soldier, served for a time to occupy men's minds, and to stay the open exhibition of the rebellious spirit.

Discontent gains ground at Kûfa.

[1] The youth, however, was not satisfied with this pair of wives; for he left twenty sons, and as many daughters, behind him. He was nephew of that Khâlid ibn Saîd who opened the Syrian campaign so ingloriously.

Meanwhile other causes were at work throughout the empire calculated to increase the disaffection; or which, if unimportant in themselves, were adroitly seized by the Caliph's enemies and turned to that purpose.

Other causes of disaffection.

First may be mentioned the recension of the Corân. The Moslem warriors had spread themselves over such vast areas, and the various columns, as well as converted peoples, were so widely separated one from the other, that differences arose in the recitation of the sacred text, as it had been settled in the previous reign. Bussorah followed the reading of Abu Mûsa; Kûfa was guided by the authority of Ibn Masûd, their chancellor; and the text of Hims differed from that in use even at Damascus. Hodzeifa, during his campaign in Persia, having witnessed the variations in the different provinces, returned to Kûfa strongly impressed with the gravity of the evil and the need of a revision. Ibn Masûd was highly incensed with the slight thus put upon the authority of his text. But Hodzeifa persisted in his views, and, supported by Saîd, the governor, urged Othmân to restore the unity of the divine word, 'before that believers began to differ in their scripture, even as do the Jews and Christians.' The Caliph took the advice of the leading Companions at Medîna, and, in accordance therewith, called for samples of the manuscripts in use throughout the empire. He then appointed a syndicate, from amongst the Coreish, of men whose authority could be relied upon, to collate these copies with the sacred originals still in the keeping of Haphsa, the widow of Mahomet. Under their supervision the variations were reconciled, and an authoritative exemplar written out, of which duplicates were deposited at Mecca and Medîna, Kûfa and Damascus. From these exemplars, copies were multiplied over the empire; all former manuscripts were called in and committed to the flames; and the standard text was brought into exclusive use. The uniformity thus secured by the secular arm, and

Othman's recension of the Corân. A.H. XXX. A.D. 651.

maintained by the same in every land and every age, is taken by the simple believer as a proof of divine custodianship. The action of Othmân was received at the moment, as it deserved, with a very general consent, excepting at Kûfa. There Ibn Masûd, who prided himself on his faultless recitation of the oracle, pure as it fell from the Prophet's lips, was much displeased; and the charge of sacrilege in having burned the former copies of the sacred text, was readily circulated amongst the factious citizens. By and by the charge was spread abroad, and was taken up with avidity by the enemies of Othmân; and, ages afterwards, we find it still eagerly urged by the partisans of the Abbasside dynasty as an unpardonable offence on the part of the ungodly Caliph. The accusation, thus trumped up for party purposes, was really without foundation. Indeed, it was scouted by Aly himself. When, several years after, he proceeded as Caliph to Kûfa, he found the citizens still blaming his ill-starred predecessor for the act. 'Silence!' he said; 'Othmân acted as he did with the advice of the leading men amongst us; and if I had been ruler at the time, instead of him, I should myself have exactly done the same.'[1]

Many of the Coreish migrate to Irâc.

A great body of the nobility from Mecca and Medîna about this time transferred their residence to Irâc. These had no right to share in the endowments of that province, the special privileges of which, in virtue of their conquest, were reserved for the present citizens of Kûfa and Bussorah. They were allowed, however, to do so on selling to Othmân, on behalf of the State, the properties which they owned in the Hejâz; and the concession appears to have added a fresh grievance

[1] On the text of the Corân, and the history of this recension, see the Excursus on the 'Sources for the Biography of Mahomet,' in the *Life of Mahomet*. The manner in which the Abbasside faction perverted the facts and turned the charge to malignant purpose against the Omeyyad house, will be understood from the section on the Corân in the *Apology of Al Kindy* (Smith and Elder, 1882), pp. 25 *et seq.* The charge against Al Hajjâj of having altered the text is equally groundless. See *Ibid.* p. xi.

to foment the rising discontent at the extravagant pretensions of the Coreish.[1]

Story of Abu Dzarr Ghifâry,

The story of Abu Dzarr Ghifâry is singularly illustrative of the times, and his harsh treatment is ordinarily mentioned as a serious ground of complaint against the Caliph. He was one of the earliest converts to the faith; and tradition asserts that he even anticipated Mahomet himself in some of the observances of Islam. An ascetic in his habits, he inveighed against the riches and extravagance of the day—evils which were altogether alien from the simplicity of Mahomet, and which, rushing in like a flood, were now demoralising the people. Gorgeous palaces, crowds of slaves, multitudes of horses, camels, flocks and herds, profusion of costly garments, sumptuous fare, and splendid equipage, were the fashion, not only in Syria and Irâc, but had begun to find their way even into the Hejâz.[2] The protest of Abu Dzarr points to the recoil of the stricter class of believers against all this luxury and indulgence; and the manner in which the discontented classes, and the advocates of communism, were beginning to turn that recoil to their own account, and to the discredit of the government. Visiting Syria, the spirit of the ascetic was

[1] The precise nature of the arrangement, as stated by Ibn al Athîr, is not very clear, but its general character seems to have been as given the text.

[2] Masûdy, an unprejudiced witness, dwells on this as one of the causes of demoralisation and disloyalty now setting in so rapidly, and he gives some remarkable instances. *Zobeir* had 1,000 slaves, male and female, and 1,000 horses. At all the great cities he had palaces, and the one at Bussorah was still to be seen in the fourth century. His landed estate in Irâc was rated at 1,000 golden pieces a day. *Abd al Rahmân* had 1,000 camels, 10,000 sheep, and 100 horses, and he left property valued at between three and four hundred thousand dinars. *Zeid* left gold and silver in great ingots, and had land valued at 10,000 dinars.

The Coreishite nobles built themselves grand palaces in Mecca and Medîna, and in their environs such as Jorf and Ackîck. Othmân himself had a splendid palace at Medîna, with marble pillars, walls of costly stucco, grand gates and gardens; he is also said to have amassed vast treasures, though we are not told what came of them after his overthrow.

Masûdy contrasts painfully all this luxury at home and abroad with the frugal severity that prevailed even in the Caliphate of Omar, who grudged to spend sixteen dinars on the pilgrimage to Mecca.

stirred at the pomps and vanities so rife around him, and he preached repentance to the inhabitants of Damascus. 'This gold and silver of yours,' he cried, 'shall one day be heated red-hot in the fire of hell; and therewith shall ye be seared in your foreheads, sides, and backs, ye ungodly spendthrifts![1] Wherefore, spend now the same in alms, leaving yourselves enough but for your daily bread; or else woe be to you in that day!' Crowds flocked to hear him, some trembling under the rebuke; the envious rejoicing at the contempt poured on the rich and noble; and the people dazzled by the vision of themselves sharing in the treasures thus denounced. Uneasy at the disturbance caused by these diatribes in the public mind, Muâvia resolved to test the spirit of the preacher. He sent him a purse of a thousand pieces; in the morning, affecting to have made a mistake, he demanded the return of the gift; but during the night Abu Dzarr had distributed the whole in charity. Upon this, Muâvia, apprehensive of the spread of communistic doctrines, despatched the preacher to Medîna, telling Othmân that he was a sincere but misguided enthusiast. Before the Caliph, Abu Dzarr persisted in fearlessly denouncing the great and wealthy, and urged that they should be forced to disgorge their riches. Othmân condescended to reason with him. 'After men have completely fulfilled their legal obligations,' he asked, 'what power remaineth with me to compel them to any further sacrifice?' and he turned to Káb, the learned Jewish convert, in corroboration of what he had said. 'Out upon thee, thou son of a Jew! What have I to do with thee?' cried Abu Dzarr, and with these words smote Káb violently upon the stomach. Argument being thus of no further use, Othmân banished the preacher to Rabadza in the desert of Nejd, where two years after he died in penury. As he felt

banished by Othman to Rabadza. A.H. XXX. A.D. 651.

[1] Quoting from the Corân (Sura ix. 36), where these words are applied to Christian priests and monks; but Abu Dzarr gives them here a more general application. See *Life of Mahomet*, p. 470; and Sprenger's *Leben des Mohammeds*, vol. ii. p. cvi.

his end approach, the hermit desired his daughter to slay a kid, and have it ready for a party of travellers who, he said, would shortly pass that way to Mecca, and bury him; then, making her turn his face toward the Kâaba, he quietly breathed his last. Soon after, the expected party came up, and amongst them Ibn Masûd from Kûfa, who, weeping over him, bewailed his fate, and buried him on the spot on which he died. The death of Ibn Masûd himself, a few days after, added to the pathos of the incident. The plaintive tale was soon in everyone's mouth; and the banishment of the pious ascetic and preacher of righteousness was made much of by the enemies of the Caliph. The necessity was forgotten; the obloquy remained.[1]

Othmân incurs odium by putting down unlawful amusements,

When he was himself minded to assume the office of censor and rebuke the ungodliness of the day, the unfortunate Caliph fared no better. The laxity of Syria had reached even to the sacred precincts of the Hejâz; and Othmân, on attempting to check the games and other practices held to be inconsistent with the profession of Islam, incurred resentment, especially from the gay youth whose amusements he had thwarted. Gambling and wagering, indeed, were put down with the approval of all the stricter classes of society; but there were not wanting many who,

[1] Attempts are made by Abbasside tradition to show that Abu Dzarr was driven into opposition by the tyranny of Muâvia's rule in Syria, and by divers ungodly practices at Medina, which he denounced as certain to bring down judgment on the city. But Ibn al Athir justly doubts this, and distinctly says that his preaching tended to excite the poor against the rich. Abu Dzarr's doctrines were based on the equality of all believers; and the danger lay in their popularity with the socialistic faction which decried the pretensions of the Coreish. Before Muâvia, he reasoned thus: '*Riches*, ye say, *are the Lord's*; and thereby ye frustrate the people's right therein; for the Lord hath given them to his people.' 'Out upon thee!' replied Muâvia; 'what is this but a quibble of words? Are we not all of us the Lord's people, and the riches belong unto the same?' Tradition dwells on the poverty of Abu Dzarr's life at Rabadza to add point to Othmân's unkind treatment. The Beni Ghifâr, his tribe, are said to have resented his ill-treatment by joining the insurgents when they appeared.

displeased with the Caliph's interference, joined in the cry of his detractors.[1]

And by extending the square of the Kâaba. A.H.XXVI. A.D. 647.

The enlargement of the grand square of the Kâaba, commenced by Omar, was carried on by Othmân during his visits to Mecca at the time of pilgrimage. And here, too, the ill-fated Caliph met with opposition. The owners of the houses demolished in the course of the work refused to accept the compensation offered, and raised a great outcry against it. The Caliph put them into prison, for, said he, 'My predecessor did the same, and ye made no outcry against him.' But what the firm arm of Omar could do, and none stir hand or foot against him, it was a very different thing for the weak and unpopular Othmân to attempt. He was more successful with the Great Mosque at Medîna, originally built by Mahomet, and hallowed by the mortal remains of the Prophet himself and his two Successors. This was now greatly enlarged and beautified. The supports, made at the first of the trunks of date-trees, were removed, and the roof made to rest on pillars of hewn stone. The walls, too, were built up with masonry, richly carved and inlaid with rare and precious stones. It was a pious work, and none objected.[2]

The Mosque at Medîna enlarged and beautified. A.H. XXXII. A.D. 653.

Yet another, and a very gratuitous, cause of murmuring arose from certain changes made by Othmân in the ceremonial

[1] On this subject historians say very little; and it is chiefly from incidental notices in fragments of early poetry that Von Kremer has so ably traced the inroads of profligacy and the practice of forbidden pastimes—music, wine, and gambling. The brief notice of Ibn al Athîr on this matter is as follows: 'The prevalence of a worldly spirit first showed itself at Medîna in the flying of doves and shooting with pellets (with a gaming aim); and in the eighth year of his Caliphate Othmân appointed an officer to stop the same, who clipped the birds' wings, and broke the cross-bows.' A citizen was rebuked by the Caliph for playing at 'oranges' (apparently some game of chance); and he thereupon got angry and joined the hostile party. The anti-Omeyyad tendency of the tradition on this subject is evident from *Welîd* (the drunkard) being named as the person employed by the Caliph to administer the rebuke.

[2] As enlarged by Othmân, the Mosque was 160 cubits long, and 150 broad. As in Omar's time, it had six gates for entrance.

of the annual pilgrimage, which, though in themselves trivial and unmeaning, excited strong disapprobation at the Caliph's court. He pitched tents for shelter during the few days spent for sacrifice at Minâ, a thing which had never been done before; and, to the prayers heretofore recited there and on Mount Arafât, he added new ones with two more series of prostrations. The ritual, as established by the Prophet himself, had been scrupulously followed by his two successors, and a superstitious reverence attached thereto even in the minutest detail. When expostulated with on the rash and unhallowed innovation, Othmân gave no reasonable answer, but simply said it was his will that it should be so.[1] Aly, Abd al Rahmân, and others were much offended at these alterations; and the disregard of the sacred example of the Founder of the faith raised a scandal among the Companions unfavourable to Othmân.

Unwise changes in the pilgrim ceremonial. A.H. XXXII. A.D. 653.

On the other hand, beyond the immediate circle of his kinsfolk, Othmân made no personal friends. Narrow, selfish, indiscreet, and obstinate—more and more so, indeed, with advancing years—he alienated those who would otherwise have stood loyally by him; and he made many enemies, who pursued him with relentless hatred. We have already seen how Mohammed son of Abu Bekr, and Mohammed son of Abu Hodzeifa, were embittered against him at the naval victory of Alexandria. And yet no very special cause can be assigned for their enmity. The first is said to have been actuated by 'passion and ambition.' The other was nearly related to Othmân, and as an orphan had been kindly

Othmân makes many enemies.

[1] Othmân defended his innovations as based on the practice of the pilgrims from Yemen, who recited additional prayers on behalf of their distant homes; and he too (he said) had a property at Tâyif, as well as at Mecca. The matter seems at first sight altogether insignificant. But in an established ritual, the smaller the change, the greater oftentimes the scandal and indignation, as we need not go far to see. And although no point of doctrine was apparently involved, yet the practice of the Prophet had come to be regarded as an obligatory precedent in the commonest matters of daily life.

brought up by him; he was now offended at having been passed over for office and command. Both joined the rebellion which shortly broke out in Egypt, and were amongst the most dangerous of the Caliph's enemies. Nor was it otherwise with the people at large. A factious spirit set in against the unfortunate prince. The leaven fermented all around; and every man who had a grievance, real or supposed, hastened to swell the hostile cry.[1]

He loses the Prophet's ring. A.H. XXIX. A.D. 650.

To crown the Caliph's ill-fortune, in the seventh year of his reign, he lost the signet-ring of silver which had been engraven for the Prophet, and which had been worn and used officially both by him and his successors. It was a favourite and meritorious occupation of Othmân to deepen the old wells, and to sink new ones, in the neighbourhood of Medîna. He was thus engaged when, sitting by the well Arîs,[2] and pointing with his finger in direction to the labourers, the ring dropped and disappeared. Every effort was made, but in vain, to recover the priceless relic. The well was emptied of the water and the mud cleared out, and a great sum was offered; but no trace of the ring ever appeared. Othmân grieved over the loss. The omen weighed heavily on his mind; and it was some time before he was prevailed upon to supply the place of the lost signet by another of like fashion.[3]

[1] For Abu Hodzeifa, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. 65. He left his infant son to be brought up by Othmân, who faithfully discharged the trust. When he grew up he asked for a government or military command, but was told that he was not yet fit for it, and must prove his capacity in the wars of Egypt and Africa. He never forgot the slight, and was active in the insurgent ranks. Various other examples are given of personal enmity, such as citizens alienated by the reprimand for gaming, a chief imprisoned for the ill-treatment of a Christian tribe, whose favourite hound he had killed, and so on.

[2] The well was at the distance of two miles from the city. Another well, called Rûma, was bought by Othmân, during the Prophet's lifetime, from the Jews for the use of the Moslems. He first purchased the half title, the well being used day about by either party; but on their alternate days the Mussulmans emptied the well of enough water to last them two days. Whereupon the Jewish owner insisted on Othmân's purchasing the entire right, which he did; and Mahomet promised him a fountain in Paradise for the same.

[3] For traditions regarding Mahomet's ring, see *Life of Mahomet*, pp. 544

Othmân had married successively two of the Prophet's daughters, both of whom died before their father. Three of his wives still survived when, in the fifth year of his Caliphate, being then between seventy and eighty years of age, he took Nâila to wife. Of her previous history we know little more than that she had once been a Christian, but, before her marriage with the Caliph, had embraced Islam. She bore him a daughter; and through all his trials clung faithfully by her aged lord, to the bitter end. The days were coming when he needed such a helper by his side.[1]

Othmân marries Nâila. A.H. XXVIII.

and 596. The despatches sent by him to the several kings in the eighth year of the Hegira were attested by it. The most received account is that the legend on it was 'Mahomet, Prophet of God' (*Mohammed Rasûl Allah*, in three lines, beginning from the bottom). It was used for all documents requiring a seal, by Mahomet and his successors. The new ring disappeared at the time of Othmân's assassination, and, like the original, was never seen again.

[1] One of the four wives who survived him was Omm al Banîn, daughter of the famous freebooter, Oyeina. Othmân had thirteen children, and (so far as we read) no issue by slave-girls, which, looking to the habits of the time, is somewhat remarkable.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DANGEROUS FACTION AT KUFA. GROWING DISAFFECTION.

A.H. XXXII.—XXXIV. A.D. 653-645.

Seditious elements at work.

TOWARDS the close of Othmân's reign, the ferment, which (excepting Syria perhaps) had long been secretly at work throughout the empire, began to make its appearance on the surface. The Arab people at large were everywhere displeased at the pretensions of the Coreish. The Coreish themselves were ill at ease, the greater part being jealous of the Omeyyad branch and of the favourites of the Caliph. And the temptation to revolt was fostered by the weakness and vacillation of Othmân himself.

Ibn Sauda preaches sedition in Egypt. A.H. XXXII. A.D. 653.

Ibn Aámir had been now three years governor of Bussorah, when Ibn Saba (or, as he is commonly called, Ibn Sauda), a Jew from the south of Arabia, appeared on the scene, and professed the desire to embrace Islam. It soon appeared that he was steeped in disaffection to the existing government—a firebrand of sedition; and as such he was expelled successively from Bussorah, Kûfa, and Syria, but not before he had given a dangerous impulse to the already discontented classes. At last, he found a safe retreat in Egypt, and there became the setter forth of strange and startling doctrines. Mahomet was to come again, even as the Messiah was expected to come again. Meanwhile, 'Aly was his legate. Othmân was a usurper, and his governors a set of godless tyrants. The people were stirred. Impiety and wrong, they heard, were rampant everywhere; truth and justice could be restored no otherwise than by the overthrow of this

wicked dynasty. Such was the preaching which gained daily ground in Egypt; by busy correspondence it was spread all over the empire, and startled the minds of men already foreboding evil from the sensible heavings of a slumbering volcano.[1]

Émeute at Kûfa. A.H. XXXIII. A.D. 654.

The breaking out of turbulence was for the moment repressed at Bussorah by Ibn Aámir; but at Kûfa, Saîd had neither power nor tact to quell the factious elements around him. He offended even his own party by ostentatiously washing the steps of the pulpit before he would ascend a spot pretended to have been made unclean by his drunken predecessor. He was not only unwise enough openly to foster the arrogant assumptions of the Coreish, but he had the folly to contemn the claims of the Arab soldiery, to whose swords they owed the conquest of the lands around them. He was so indiscreet as to call the beautiful vale of Chaldæa (the Sawâd) '*the Garden of the Coreish*'—'as if,' cried the offended Arabs, 'without us—our strong arm and our good lances—they could have ever won this Garden.' The disaffection, stimulated by a popular leader named Ashtar, and a knot of factious citizens, found vent at last in an émeute. As the governor and a company of the people, according to the custom of the time, sat one day together in free and equal converse, the

[1] The name of this demagogue was Abdallah ibn Sabs, but he was usually called Ibn Sauda, and was supposed to come from Yemen. It is notable that this first sect of Alyites (if it can be so called) was founded by a Jewish convert. What led him (if the story of his teaching be not altogether a proleptic fiction of tradition) to magnify Aly, who had hitherto put forth no claim, nor indeed at any time dreamed of the extravagant pretensions in store for him after his death, it is difficult to understand. Nor did these transcendental notions regarding Aly gain any ground whatever till a much later period. Ibn Sauda had evidently imbibed some extreme notions on the dignity of prophets. 'Strange,' he is reported to have said;—'strange that men should believe in the second coming of the Messiah, and not in that of Mahomet.' The idea, we are told, was inspired by the verse in Sura xxviii. v. 84, 'Verily, he who hath given thee the Corân will surely bring thee back again;' which, of course, referred only to Mahomet's returning again to Mecca. Indeed, the whole account of this man's teaching is obscure and uncertain; and the Alyite notices of it may be altogether anticipatory and unreal.

topic turned on the bravery of Talha, who had shielded the Prophet in the day of battle. 'Ah!' exclaimed Saîd, with an invidious contrast, '*he* is a warrior, if ye choose, a real gem amongst your Bedouin counterfeits. A few more like him, and we should dwell at ease.' The assembly was still nettled at this speech, when a youth incautiously gave expression to the wish, how pleasant it would be if the governor possessed a certain property which lay invitingly by the river bank near Kûfa. 'What!' shouted the company with one voice, 'and out of our Sawâd!' So saying, and with a torrent of abuse, they leaped upon the lad and upon his father, who vainly endeavoured to urge his youth in excuse of his indiscretion, and went near to killing both.[1]

The ringleaders are exiled to Syria.

The factious spirits were emboldened by the outbreak; and discontent now found open and disloyal expression throughout the kingdom. Saîd, supported by the Coreishite nobility, appealed against their machinations to Othmân, who ordered that ten of the ringleaders should be expelled to Syria.[2] There the Caliph hoped that the powerful rule

[1] The youth and his father belonged to the Beni Asad. On hearing of the riot, Toleiha (the *quondam* prophet), chief of that tribe, hastened with a body of his men to the palace for their rescue; but found that both had escaped half dead.

Another version is, that on Saîd's giving expression to the sentiment about 'the Sawâd being the Garden of the Coreish,' the whole company sprang to their feet and shouted excitedly: 'Nay, but the Lord hath given the Sawâd to us and to our swords.' On this, the captain of the body-guard retorted angrily at their rude reception of his master's words; whereupon they set upon him and left him half dead. The inflammable material was all around, and wanted only the spark to explode. This unfortunate speech about 'the Garden of the Coreish' was in the mouths of the disaffected all through the insurrection.

[2] The chief amongst them was Mâlik al Ashtar, of whom we shall hear more as the most sanguinary amongst the traitors; Zeid ibn Sohan; Jondob (already noticed); Orwa; and Thâbit ibn Cays. Yezîd, a brother of the last, another chief leader of sedition, was not sent. Muâvia wrote to Othmân that they were an ignorant crew, bent on sedition, and on *getting possession of the property of the Zimmîs*, that is of the subject races, whose rights of occupancy had been recognised as the hereditary tenants of the Sawâd—a policy, as we have seen, firmly upheld by Omar throughout Chaldæa, and which it was one object of the malcontents to upset. According to one account, the

of his lieutenant and the loyal example of the Syrians would inspire the malcontents with better feelings. Muâvia quartered them in the church of St. Mary ; and morning and evening, as he passed by, abused them roundly on their folly in setting up their crude claims against the indefeasible rights of the Coreish. Crest-fallen under several weeks of such treatment, they were sent on to Hims, where the governor, son of the great Khâlid, subjected them for a month to like indignities. Whenever he rode forth, he showered invectives on them as barbarous and factious creatures, who were doing all in their power to undermine the empire. Their spirit at last was thoroughly broken, and they professed to be repentant. They were then released; but, ashamed to return to Kûfa, they remained for the time in Syria, excepting the dangerous demagogue Ashtar, who made his way secretly to Medîna.

Said expelled from Kûfa. A.H. XXXIV. A.D. 655.

Months passed, and things did not mend at Kûfa. Most of the leading men, whose influence could have kept the populace in check, were away on military command in Persia ; and the malcontents, in treasonable correspondence with the Egyptian faction, gained head daily. Disheartened at this, Saîd, in an unlucky moment, planned a visit to Medîna, there to lay his troubles before the Caliph. No sooner had he gone than the conspirators came to the front, and recalled the exiles from Syria. Ashtar, too, was soon upon the scene. Taking his stand at the door of the Great Mosque of Kûfa, he stirred up the people, as they assembled for worship, against Saîd : ' He had just left that despot,' he said, ' at Medîna,

exiles were sent back by Muâvia, after expressing penitence, at once to Kûfa —where, however, resuming their factious courses, Othmân, as a last resource, despatched them again to Syria, this time to Abdallah, Khâlid's son, at Hims. Muâvia is throughout represented as *upholding the claims of the Coreish* against the Arab faction, showing thus the real aim of the ringleaders.

A story is told that the exiles, enraged at the menaces of Muâvia, leaped upon him and seized him by the beard; whereupon, shaking them off, he warned them that they knew little of the loyal spirit of the Syrians, who, if they only saw what they were doing, would be so enraged that it would be out of his power to save their lives.

plotting their ruin, counselling the Caliph to cut down their stipends, even the women's; and calling the broad fields which they had conquered *The Garden of the Coreish.*' The acting governor, helped by the better class of citizens, sought in vain to still the rising storm. He inculcated patience upon them. 'Patience!' cried Cacâa, the great warrior, in scorn; 'ye might as well roll back the Great River when in flood as attempt to quell the people's uproar till they have the thing they want.' Yezîd, brother of one of the exiles, then raised a standard, and called upon all the enemies of the tyrannical governor to join and bar his return to Kûfa. When Saîd drew near, they marched out as far as Câdesîya, and sent forward to say that 'they did not need him any more.' Saîd, little expecting such a reception, said to them, 'It had sufficed if ye had sent a delegate with your complaint to the Caliph; but now ye come forth a thousand strong against a single man!' They were deaf to his expostulations. The servant of Saîd, endeavouring to push on, was slain by Ashtar; and Saîd himself fled back to Medîna, where he found Othmân already terrified by tidings of the outbreak, and prepared to yield whatever the insurgents might demand.

Abu Mûsa appointed in his room.

At their desire he appointed Abu Mûsa governor in place of Saîd. To welcome him the captains in command of the reserves and outlying garrisons came in from all quarters; and Abu Mûsa received them in the crowded Mosque of Kûfa. He first exacted from all present the pledge of loyalty to the Caliph, and then installed himself in office by leading the prayers of the great assembly.

Othmân's fatal mistake.

If, instead of giving way, Othmân had inflicted on the ringleaders condign punishment, he might haply have succeeded in weathering the storm. It is true that thus he would, in all likelihood have precipitated rebellion, not only in Kûfa, but also in Bussorah and Egypt. But, sooner or later, that was inevitable; and in the struggle, he would now have had a strong support. For here the contention was between

the Coreish and the nobility of Islam on the one hand, and the Arab tribes and city rabble on the other; and in this question the leaders of martial renown would all have rallied round the throne. By his pitiable weakness in yielding to the insurgents, Othmân not only courted the contempt of all around him, but lost the opportunity of placing the great controversy about to convulse the Moslem world, upon its proper issue. It fell, instead, to the level of a quarrel obscured by personal interests, and embittered by charges of tyranny and nepotism against himself. The crisis was now inevitable. Men saw that Othmân lacked the wisdom and the strength to meet it, and each looked to his own concern. Seditious letters circulated freely everywhere; and the claims began to be canvassed of successors to the irresolute and narrow-minded Caliph, who, it was foreseen, could not long retain the reins of empire in his grasp.

Aly expostulates with Othmân.

Thus, even at Medîna, sedition spread, and from thence messages reached the provinces that the sword would soon be needed there at home, rather than in foreign parts. So general was the contagion that but few are named as having escaped it.[1] Moved by the leading citizens, Aly repaired to Othmân and said:—'The people bid me expostulate with thee. Yet what can I say to thee—son-in-law as thou wast of the Prophet and his bosom friend—that thou already knowest not as well as I? The way lieth plain and wide before thee; but thine eyes are blinded that thou canst not see it. If blood be once shed, it will not cease to flow until the Day of Judgment. Right will be blotted out, and treason rage like the foaming waves of the sea.' Othmân complained, and not without reason, of the unfriendly attitude assumed by Aly himself. 'For my own part,' he said, 'I have done my best;

[1] Only two or three names are given of those who kept aloof from seditious action: as Zeid ibn Thâbit (the collector of the Corân); Hassân, the poet, his brother; Kâb ibn Mâlik, and Abu Oseid—all natives of Medîna; so that the whole body of Refugees (the Coreish), excepting Othmân's immediate kinsmen, must have joined the treasonable faction.

and as for the men ye speak of, did not Omar himself appoint Moghîra to Kûfa; and if Ibn Aâmir be my kinsman, is he any the worse for that?' 'No,' replied Aly; 'but Omar kept his lieutenants in order, and when they did wrong he punished them; whereas thou treatest them softly, because they are thy kinsmen.'[1] 'And Muâvia, too,' continued the Caliph; 'it was Omar who appointed him to Syria.' 'Yes,' answered Aly; 'but I swear that even Omar's slaves did not stand so much in awe of their master, as did Muâvia. But now he doth whatever he pleaseth, and saith *It is Othmân.* And thou, knowing it all, leavest him alone!' So saying, Aly turned and went his way.

Othmân appeals to the people.

As Aly's message professed to come from the people, Othmân went straightway to the pulpit and addressed the multitude then assembled for prayer in the Great Mosque. He reproached them for giving vent to their tongues and following evil leaders, whose object it was to blacken his name, exaggerate his faults, and hide his virtues. 'Ye blame me,' he said, 'for things which ye bore cheerfully from Omar. He trampled on you, beat you about with his whip, and abused you. And yet ye took it all patiently from him, both in what ye liked and what ye disliked. I have been gentle with you; bended my back unto you; withheld my tongue from reviling, and my hand from smiting. And now ye rise up against me!' Then, after dwelling on the prosperity of his reign at home and abroad, and the many benefits that had accrued to them therefrom, he ended thus:—'Wherefore, refrain, I beseech you, from your abuse of me and of my governors, lest ye kindle the flames of sedition and revolt throughout the empire.' The appeal (we are told) was marred by his cousin Merwân, who at its close exclaimed, 'If ye will oppose the Caliph, we shall soon bring it to the issue of the sword.'

[1] No doubt Aly spoke the truth. Yet Othmân's weakness towards the seditious populace was a far greater peril than his tender treatment of his governors.

'Be silent!' cried Othmân, 'and leave me with my fellows alone. Did I not tell thee not to speak?' So Merwân remained silent, and Othmân descended from the pulpit. The harangue had no effect for good. The discontent spread, and the gatherings against the Caliph multiplied.[1]

Close of Othmân's eleventh year.

Thus ended the eleventh year of Othmân's reign. Near the close of it was held a memorable council, of which we shall read in the following chapter. The Caliph performed the pilgrimage as usual. He had done so every year. But this was to be his last.

[1] I have given all this as I find it in tradition, but not without some misgiving; especially of the part about Merwân, whom, as the evil genius of Othmân, the Abbasside writers are never weary of abusing.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE OUTLOOK DARKENS.

A.H. XXXIV.—XXXV. A.D. 655.

Contumelious treatment of Othmân.

THE unhappy Caliph was now being hurried on, by the rapid course of events, helplessly to his sad end. Abd al Rahmân, who, no doubt, felt a large measure of responsibility from the share he took in the nomination of Othmân, was about this time removed by death. But even he was dissatisfied; and one of the first open denunciations of Othmân's unscrupulous disregard of law—small it might be, but significant—is attributed to him. A fine camel, having come in with the tithes of a Bedouin tribe, was presented by the Caliph, as a rarity, to one of his kinsfolk. Abd al Rahmân, scandalised at the misappropriation of religious property devoted to the poor, laid hands upon the animal, slaughtered it, and divided the flesh among the people. The personal reverence attaching heretofore to the 'Successor of the Prophet of the Lord,' gave place to slight and disregard. Even in the streets, Othmân was greeted with cries, demanding that he should depose Ibn Aâmir and the godless Abu Sarh, and put away from him Merwân, his chief adviser and confidant. Nor had he any countenance or support whatever from the people excepting his immediate kinsmen, and reliance upon them only aggravated the clamour of the discontented.[1]

[1] Amru, who had become a petulant malcontent ever since his deposition, is represented as speaking contumeliously of Othmân to his very face; and Othmân is represented as returning it in kind, calling him 'a louse in his garments.' On one occasion the Caliph is said to have addressed the people, 'leaning on the staff of Mahomet' (a venerable relic that had descended from

Othmân sends forth messengers to inquire into the feeling in the provinces.

The conspirators canvassed in the dark. They had been hitherto burrowing carefully under ground. But now their machinations every here and there were coming to the light, and rumours of treason began to float abroad. The better affected classes in the great cities felt uneasy; alarm crept over all hearts. Letters were continually received at Medîna, asking what these ominous sounds of warning meant, and what catastrophe was at hand. The chief men of Medîna kept coming to the Caliph's court for tidings; but, notwithstanding the sullen mutterings of nearing tempest, the surface yet was still. At last, by their advice, Othmân despatched four trusty persons one to each of the great centres, Damascus, Kûfa, Bussorah, and Fostât, with a commission to watch and report whether any suspicious symptoms were transpiring anywhere.[1] Three returned saying that they discovered nothing unusual in the aspect of affairs. The fourth, Ammâr, was looked for in vain; he had, in fact, been tampered with and gained over by the Egyptian faction. Thereupon Othmân despatched a royal edict to all the provinces as follows:—At the coming pilgrimage the various governors would, according to custom, present themselves at court; whoever, then, had cause of complaint against them, or any other ground of dissatisfaction, should come forward on that occasion and substantiate the same, when wrong would be redressed; or else it behoved them to withdraw the baseless calumnies which were troubling men's minds. Proclamation was made accordingly. The plaintive appeal was understood; and the people in many places when they heard it wept, and invoked mercy on their Caliph.

the Prophet to Abu Bekr and Omar), when an Arab seized and broke it over Othmân's head. Such stories, however much they may be tinged with Abbaside exaggeration and prejudice, point to the fact that Othmân was falling rapidly in popular esteem.

[1] The four were Mohammed ibn Maslama, often employed by Omar, as he had been by Mahomet himself, on confidential missions; Osâma ibn Zeid, commander of the Syrian expedition at Mahomet's death; Abdallah, son of Omar; and Ammâr, whose injudicious appointment by Omar to the governorship of Kûfa appears to have turned his head, for he fell into the conspirators' toils.

Conference of Governors at Medîna. A.H. XXXIV. A.D. 655.

The governors repaired to Medîna at the time appointed, but no malcontent came forward to make complaint. Questioned by Othmân, his lieutenants knew not of any grievance, real and substantial. To the outward eye, everything was calm; and even the royal messengers sent to make inquisition had returned without laying hand on anything amiss. But all knew of the cancerous sore in the body politic, and of its spreading rapidly. The wretched Caliph invoked their pity and their counsel. But they could offer nothing of which he might lay hold. One advised that the conspirators should be arrested and the ringleaders put to death; another that the stipends should be forfeited of all disloyal men; a third that the unquiet spirits amongst the people should be diverted by some fresh campaign; others that the governors should amend their ways. Othmân was bewildered; one thing only he declared, that to measures of severity he never would assent; the single remedy he could approve was the sending of fresh expeditions to foreign parts.[1]

[1] We have abundance of conversations professing to have passed between Othmân and his advisers; but they have no further authority than as they represent the sentiments conventionally attributed to the several speakers. As, however, it may give point to the crisis now rapidly approaching, I subjoin the following epitome of the most received account:—

Othmân: 'Alas, alas! what is all this I hear of you, my deputies and governors? I greatly fear that the complaints may be true; and it is upon me the burden falleth.' They replied that the Caliph had sent his own men out to see, and they had found nothing wrong. Then he asked what they advised him to do. *Sâd* (ex-governor of Kûfa) would have the traitors, who were burrowing in the dark, unearthed and slain; then sedition would subside. *Muâvia:* 'In Syria there is no disaffection, and it would be everywhere the same were the people fairly and firmly dealt with.' *Abu Sarh* proposed to work through the Dewân, increasing or diminishing stipends by way of reward and punishment. *Ibn Âámir* advised to engage the restless spirits in war, and so the crisis would pass over. *Amru*, embittered by his supersession in Egypt, is represented as addressing Othmân in coarse abuse. Othmân replied despondingly:—'Cruel measures he would not sanction. If rebellion was to come, no one should, at the least, have that to say against him. The millstone would grind round and round to the bitter end. Good had it been, if before it began to revolve, he had been taken to his rest. There was nought left for him but to be quiet and to see that no wrong was done to anyone.' So he gave the governors leave to depart, saying only that if fresh campaigns were set on foot, he would approve of that; otherwise he would hold on his way.

Nothing was settled to avert the crisis, and the governors departed as they came. When Muâvia made ready to leave, he once more warned Othmân of his danger, and entreated that he would retire with him to Syria, where a loyal people were ready to rally round him. But the Caliph answered: 'Even to save my life I will not quit the land wherein the Prophet sojourned, nor the city wherein his sacred person resteth.' 'Then let me send an army to stand by thee.' 'Nay, that I will not,' responded Othmân firmly; 'I never will put force on those who dwell around the Prophet's home, by quartering bands of armed men upon them.' 'In that case,' replied Muâvia, 'I see nought but destruction awaiting thee.' 'Then the Lord be my defence,' exclaimed the aged Caliph, 'and that sufficeth for me.'[1] 'Fare thee well!' said Muâvia, and he departed, to see his face no more.

Othmân declines help from Muâvia.

As he took the road to Syria, Muâvia passed by a group of the Coreish, amongst whom were Aly and Zobeir. He stayed for a moment to drop a warning word into their ears. They were drifting back, he said, into the anarchy of 'the days of Ignorance' before Islam. The Lord was a strong Avenger of the weak and injured ones. 'To you'—and these

Muâvia retires, warning the Coreish.

As they took their leave, Kâb, the Jewish convert, said, 'It will be the grey mule that wins,' meaning Muâvia, who overheard the saying and from that moment (so the tradition runs) kept the Caliphate in view.

Another scene is represented, in which Othmân, surrounded by his own advisers, sends for Aly, Zobeir, and Talha. Muâvia pleaded before them the cause of the aged Caliph, and warned them of the danger they ran to their own selves in allowing any attack calculated to abate the sacredness of the Caliph's person; it was, he said, both their duty and their interest to support him in his feeble old age. On this, Aly reproached Muâvia as the son of Hind, the 'chewer of Hamza's liver.' 'Let alone my mother,' he responded angrily; 'she became a good believer, and after that was not a whit behind thine own.' Othmân interposed: 'My cousin Muâvia doth speak the truth. Now tell me wherein I have gone astray, and I will amend my ways. It may be that I have been too open-handed towards my kinsmen. Take back that which they have received.' So Abu Sarh disgorged 50,000 dirhems; and Merwân 15,000, and they all departed for the moment satisfied.

But all these accounts must be received with suspicion. In the midst of such violent factions as were springing up, the marvel is that tradition has preserved so consistent a narrative as we have.

[1] Adapting the words from Sura xxxix. v. 39.

were his last words—'to you I commit this helpless aged man. Help him, and it will be the better for you. Fare ye well.' And so saying he passed on his way. The company remained some time in silence. At last Aly spoke: 'It will be best done as he hath said.' 'By the Lord!' added Zobeir, 'there never lay a burden heavier on thy breast, nor yet on ours, than this burden of Othmân's to-day.'

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE PLOT RIPENS. CONSPIRATORS ATTACK MEDINA. DEATH OF OTHMAN.

A.H. XXXV. A.D. 656.

Plot to surprise Medîna. End of A.H. XXXIV. Summer of A.D. 655.

THE plot was now rapidly coming to a head, and a plan of action had been already fixed. While the lieutenants of the Caliph were absent from their posts on the occasion just described, the conspirators were to issue from Kûfa, Bussorah, and Fostât, so as to converge upon Medîna in combined and menacing force. There, in answer to the Caliph's challenge, they would present an endless roll of complaints, and cry loudly for redress, reform, and the removal of their governors. If the request were denied, they would demand the abdication of Othmân, and, in the last resort, enforce their demand at the point of the sword. But as to a successor they were not agreed. Kûfa was for Zobeir; Bussorah was for Talha; Egypt's favourite was Aly.

The conspirators set out for Medîna. Shawwâl, XXXV. April, A.D. 656.

The scheme, being immature, at first miscarried. But some months later, in the middle of the following year, it was revived and preparations made in secret for giving it effect. Under the pretext of visiting Mecca, and there performing the Lesser Pilgrimage, the concerted movement at last took place, two or three months before the annual pilgrimage.[1] Abu Sarh, the Governor of Egypt, on learning

[1] For the Lesser Pilgrimage, or Omra, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. xii. It may be performed in any month of the year, but preferably in Rajab (three months earlier than the commonly received date of the attack, which I have followed); and some traditions accordingly give this as the date of the advance upon Medina. That, however, would make the interval (from January to May)

of the treasonable design, at once despatched a messenger to apprise Othmân. In reply he was ordered to pursue the rebels; he did so, but it was too late; they had marched beyond his reach. On turning back, he found Egypt in the hands of the traitor, son of Abu Hodzeifa,[1] and fleeing for his life, took refuge across the border, in Palestine. Amongst the insurgent leaders of Egypt was Mohammed, son of Abu Bekr.

The insurgents encamp near Medîna; but retire.

On receiving the intelligence that the insurgents were marching on Medîna, Othmân ascended the pulpit of the Great Mosque and made known to the citizens the real object of attack. 'It is against myself,' he said; 'soon they will look back with a longing eye to this my Caliphate, and wish that each day of the same had been a year in length, because of the tumult and bloodshed, anarchy and ungodliness, that will flood the land.' The rebels were not long in making their appearance, and they pitched three camps, the men of Kûfa, Bussorah, and Egypt, each encamping separately, in the neighbourhood of Medîna.[2] The citizens put on their armour, a thing unheard of since the days of the Apostasy in the reign of Abu Bekr, and prepared for resistance. The insurgents, foiled thus far, sent deputies to the widows of Mahomet, and the chief men of the city. 'We come,' they said, 'to visit the Prophet's home and resting-place, and to ask that certain of the governors be deposed. Give us leave to enter.' But leave was not granted. Then the insurgent bands despatched each a deputation to its respective candidate. Aly stormed at the messengers sent to him as soon as they appeared, and called them rebels accursed of the Prophet; and the others met with no better reception at the hands of Talha and Zobeir. Unable to gain over the

too long for the intervening events, which were hurried through within the period of a couple of months, if so long.

[1] See above, p. 313.

[2] The men of Kûfa pitched at Al Awas; the Bussorah party at Dzu Khashab; the Egyptians at Dzu Marwa—all places in the close neighbourhood of the city.

citizens, without whose consent their object was out of reach, the rebel leaders declared themselves satisfied with a promise from the Caliph of reform, and, breaking up their camp, retired in the order in which they came. They made as if each company was taking its way home again, but really with the concerted plan of returning shortly, when they expected to find the city less prepared to resist.[1] The citizens cast aside their armour, rejoicing in the apparent deliverance from a pressing danger; and for some days things went on as before, Othmân leading the prayers. Suddenly, the three bands reappeared at the city gates. A party headed by Aly went forth to ask the reason. The strangers pointed to a document attested by the Caliph's seal; this, they said, had been taken from a servant of Othmân's whom they caught hastening on the road to Egypt; and it contained orders that the insurgents were to be seized and imprisoned, some tortured, and some put to death. Aly, suspecting collusion, asked how the discovery made by the Egyptian company on the road to Fostât had become so promptly known to the others marching in quite a different direction, to Kûfa and Bussorah, as to bring them all back together? 'Speak of it as ye will,' they said, 'here is the writing, and here the Caliph's seal.' Aly repaired to Othmân, who denied all knowledge of the document; but, with the view of clearing up the matter, consented to receive a deputation of the rebel leaders. Introduced by Aly, they made no obeisance to the Caliph, but with defiant attitude approached and recounted their grievances. They had retired with the promise of redress; but, instead of redress, here was the Caliph's own servant whom they had caught posting onward to Egypt with the treacherous document now produced. Othmân swore solemnly that he knew nothing of it. 'Then

They return with document bearing the Caliph's seal.

Angry altercation with the Caliph.

[1] They marched off, we are told, expecting that the citizens would break up their armed gathering as soon as they were gone, and concerting to return again each from their separate road.

say who it was that wrote this order.' 'I know not,' said the aged Caliph. 'But it was passed off as thine; thy servant carried it; see, here is thy seal, and yet thou wast not privy to it!' Again Othmân affirmed that it was even so.[1] 'Either thou speakest truth,' they cried in accents loud and rude, 'or thou art a liar. Either way, thou art unworthy of the Caliphate. We dare not leave the sceptre in the hands of one who is either a knave or a fool too weak to govern others. Resign, for the Lord hath deposed thee!' Othmân made answer:—'The garment wherewith the Lord hath girded me I will in no wise put off; but any evil ye complain of, that I am ready to put away from me.' It was all too late, they cried; he had often made, and as often broken, the promise to amend; they could no longer put any trust in him; now they would fight until he abdicated, or else was slain. 'Death,' said Othmân, gathering himself up, with the

[1] The history of the document is obscure. On the one hand, it certainly was sealed with the Caliph's signet; but who affixed the seal, and whether it was surreptitiously obtained, cannot be told. Nobody alleges Othmân's complicity. Most traditions attribute the writing and sealing of the order to Merwân, the Caliph's unpopular cousin, who, throughout the narrative, receives constant abuse as the author of Othmân's troubles; but all this is manifestly tinged by Abbasside and anti-Omeyyad prejudice. Aly's objection of collusion between the three insurgent bodies appears unanswerable. There must have been some preconcerted scheme as to the simultaneous return of the three camps; and there is a strong presumption of something unfair as regards the document also. Amidst conflicting evidence, it is beyond the historian's power to offer any conclusive explanation. It is, of course, possible that Merwân may have taken upon himself the issue and despatch of the rescript; and, indeed, there was not wanting ground for his venturing on such a course (and something perhaps also to be said for his doing it unknown to Othmân), excepting only the deception of the insurgents by false promises. The insurgents may also have got scent of the document before they started ostensibly with the purpose of returning home. But these are all mere assumptions.

The Persian version of Tabari has a different story, namely, that the Egyptian band, on seizing the document, turned their faces back again towards Medîna, despatching at the same time messengers to apprise the Kûfa and Bussorah bands of Othmân's treachery, and to recall them, so that all should reach Medîna and join in the attack together. Neither Ibn al Athîr nor Ibn Khallicân have anything to this effect, and it is hardly consistent with Aly's speech, noticed above. The Arabic original of Tabari, now being published, may possibly throw further light on this chapter.

firmness and dignity which marked his last days—'Death I prefer; as for fighting, I have said it already, my people shall not fight; had that been my desire, I had summoned legions to my side.' The altercation becoming loud and violent, Aly arose and departed to his home. The conspirators also retired to their fellows; but they had now secured what they wanted, a footing in the city. They joined in the ranks of worshippers at the daily prayers in the Great Mosque, cast dust in the face of Othmân as he officiated, and threatened the citizens to make them keep away. The fatal crisis was hurrying on.

Tumult in the Mosque; Othmân struck down.

On the Friday following this scene, when the prayers were done, Othmân ascended the pulpit. He first appealed to the better sense of the citizens, who (he knew), however cowed by the threats of the rebels, condemned their lawless attitude. Then turning to the conspirators themselves, who had been taking part in the service, he continued, 'Ye are aware that the men of Medîna hold you to be accursed at the mouth of the Prophet, for that ye have risen up against his Caliph and Vicegerent. Wherefore wipe out now your evil deeds by repentance, and by good deeds atone for the same.' One and another of the loyal citizens arose earnestly to confirm the Caliph's words and plead his cause; but they were silenced and violently set down.[1] A tumult arose. The men of Medîna were driven from the Mosque and its court, by showers of stones. One of these struck Othmân, who fell from the pulpit to the ground, and was carried to his house adjoining in a swoon. He soon recovered, and for some days was still able to preside at the daily prayers. But at last the insolence and violence of the insurgents, rising beyond bounds, forced him to keep to his house, and

[1] Mohammed ibn Maslama, a Companion (as we have seen) highly trusted both by Mahomet and his successors; and Zeid ibn Thâbit, the collector of the Corân, tried to speak in confirmation of what Othmân had said, but were violently silenced and abused by the rebels Hakam ibn Jabala and Mohammed ibn Coteira.

a virtual blockade ensued. But a body-guard of armed retainers, supported by certain of the citizens, succeeded for the present in keeping the entrance safe.

Attitude of Aly, Zobeir, and Talha.

From the day of the first tumult, Aly, Zobeir, and Talha (the three named by the rebels as candidates for the Caliphate) each sent a son to join the loyal and gallant band planted at the palace door. But they did little more; and, in fact, throughout the painful episode, they kept themselves altogether in the background. After the uproar and Othmân's swoon, they came along with others to inquire how he fared. But no sooner did they enter, than Merwân and other kinsmen tending the Caliph, cried out against Aly as the prime author of the disaster, which would recoil, they said (and said truly) upon his own head. Thereupon Aly arose in wrath, and, with the rest, retired home. It was, in truth, a cruel and dastardly desertion, and in the end bore bitter fruit for one and all. It was not only a crime, but a fatal mistake. Alarm at the defiant rising against constituted authority, and loyalty to the throne, equally demanded bold and uncompromising measures. The truth was outspoken by one of the Companions at the time. 'Ye Coreish,' he said, 'there hath been till now a strong and fenced door betwixt you and the Arabs; wherefore do ye now break down the same?'[1]

Othmân closely besieged; holds parley with Aly, Zobeir, and Talha.

So soon as the conspirators had shown their true colours, Othmân despatched an urgent summons to Syria and Bussorah for help. Muâvia, who had long foreseen the dire necessity, was ready with a strong force which, as well as a similar column sent by Ibn Aâmir from Bussorah, hurried to

[1] There are traditions, but of an entirely Abbasside stamp, of other interviews between Aly and the Caliph, with repeated promises of the latter to amend; Aly recriminating that these promises were no sooner made, even from the pulpit and before the congregation, than under the baneful influence of Merwân they were broken. Even Nâila, his wife, is represented as blaming her weak-minded husband for his fickleness. But were all this true, it would go but a little way to relieve Aly, Zobeir, and Talha from the charge of desertion, or, worse, of treasonable collusion with rebels against the rightful monarch—a short-sighted policy even in their own interest.

their master's rescue. But the march was long, and the difficulty was for Othmân to hold out until these columns reached. The insurgents had entire possession of the Mosque and of the approaches to the palace; and, in the height of insolence, their leader now took the Caliph's place at public prayers.[1] There were no troops at Medîna, and Othmân was dependent on the little force that barely sufficed to guard the palace entrance. It was composed of train-band slaves, some eighteen near kinsmen, and other citizens including (as we have said) the sons of Aly, Zobeir, and Talha. Apprehending, from the ferocity with which the attack began now to be pressed, that the end might not be far, Othmân sent to tell Aly, Zobeir, and Talha that he wished to see them once more. They came and waited without the palace, but within reach of hearing. The Caliph, from the flat roof of his house, bade them to sit down; and so for the moment they all sat down, both foes and friends, together. 'My fellow citizens!' cried Othmân with a loud voice, 'I have prayed to the Lord for you, that when I am taken, he may set the Caliphate aright.' After this, he made mention of his previous life, and how the Lord had made choice of him to be the Successor of his Prophet, and Commander of the Faithful. And now,' said he, 'ye have risen up to slay the Lord's elect. Have a care, ye men! (and here he addressed the besiegers); the taking of life is lawful but for three things, Apostasy, Murder, and Adultery. Taking my life without such cause, ye but suspend the sword over your own necks. Sedition and bloodshed shall not depart for ever from your midst.' They gave him audience thus far, and then cried out that there was yet a fourth just cause of death, namely the quenching of truth by iniquity, and of right by violence; and that for his ungodliness and tyranny he must abdicate or be slain. For a moment Othmân was silent. Then calmly rising, he bade the

[1] He is called Al Ghâficky, the '*Ameer*,' or Commander of the insurgents.

citizens go back to their homes; and himself, with but faint hopes of relief, turned to re-enter his dreary abode.[1]

The blockade pressed. Sufferings from thirst.

The blockade had now lasted several weeks, when a mounted messenger reached the city with tidings that succour was on its way.[2] But this, coming to the knowledge of the Caliph's enemies, only made them redouble their efforts. They now closed every approach, allowing neither outlet nor ingress to a single soul. Water could be introduced by stealth only at night, and, there being no well within the palace, the little garrison suffered the extremities of thirst. On the appeal of Othmân, Aly interposed, and expostulated with the besiegers. 'They were treating their Caliph,' he told them, 'more cruelly than they would treat Greek or Persian captives in the field. Even Infidels did not deny water to a thirsty enemy.' But they were deaf to his entreaty. Omm Habîba, the Prophet's widow, and sister of Muâvia, touched with pity, sought herself, with Aly's aid, to carry water upon her mule through the rebel lines into the palace; but neither her sex nor rank, nor her relation to the Prophet, was safeguard enough to prevent her being roughly handled. They cut her bridle with their swords, so that she nearly fell to the ground, and then drove her rudely back.

[1] According to some traditions, we are told, that Othmân prevailed on Aly to procure for him a three days' truce, under the pretence of issuing orders to the governors for a reform of the admininistration; and that he treacherously employed the time instead in strengthening the defences, and excused himself by saying that the time was too short to carry out the promised reforms. But the story is altogether of the Abbasside type.

[2] The authorities are conflicting as to the length of the siege, though the several stages of the attack and investment are sufficiently well defined. After the first uproar Othmân still presided at the daily prayers for thirty days, after which he was besieged for forty days—that is ten weeks in all. Another tradition is that after the blockade had lasted eight and forty days, tidings of coming succour reached the city, and then the investment became severe. But this would leave too long an interval—namely, three weeks—between the report of help being on its way and the final issue, before which the columns, hurrying from Syria and Bussorah, should have had ample time to arrive at Medîna. The Syrian column, we are told, reached as far as Wâdy al Cora, and that from Bussorah as far as Rabadza, when they heard that all was over, and accordingly turned back.

The better part of the inhabitants were shocked at the violence and inhumanity of the rebels; but none had the courage to oppose them. Sick at heart, most kept to their houses; while others, alarmed for themselves, as well as to avoid the cruel spectacle, quitted Medîna. It is hard to believe that, even in the defenceless state of the city, Aly, Zobeir, and Talha, the great heroes of Islam, could not, had they really wished it, have raised an effective opposition to the lawless work of these heartless regicides. History cannot acquit them, if not of actual collusion with the insurgents, at least of cold-blooded indifference to their Caliph's fate.[1]

[1] The talk among the courtiers of Al Mâmûn, in the third century, as reflected in the *Apology of Al Kindy*, was that Aly, even at a much earlier period, contemplated the putting of Othmân to death (*Apology*, p. 25). There seems to be no proof or presumption of this; but anyhow, one cannot but feel indignant at the attitude of Aly, who would do so much and no more; who sent his son to join the Caliph's guard at the palace gate, and was scandalised at his being denied water to drink; and yet would not so much as raise a finger to save his life.

We have also traditions in which Othmân is represented as reproaching Talha for encouraging the insurgents to a more strict enforcement of the blockade; but, whatever his demerits in deserting the Caliph, this seems incredible. The ordinary account is that Talha as well as Zobeir, on hearing of the rebel excesses, kept to his house; others, again, say that they both quitted Medîna.

Omm Habîba, as daughter of Abu Sofiân, naturally sympathised with Othmân. Hantzala, one of the citizens of Kûfa who had accompanied the insurgents, was so indignant at their treatment of one of 'the Mothers of the Faithful,' that he went off to his home, and there gave vent to his feelings in verses expressive of his horror at the scenes his comrades were enacting at Medîna.

One day, we are told, Othmân, goaded by the thirst of himself and his household, ascended the roof, and cried aloud: 'Ye men! know ye that I bought the well Rûma, and furnished it with gear that the Moslems might quench their thirst thereat? and now ye will not let me have one drop to quench my thirst. Moreover, I builded you such and such a mosque; and now ye hinder me from going forth to say my prayers in the Great Mosque.' And so on, contrasting the various benefits he had conferred upon them, and the kind and loving words the Prophet used to address to him, with the cruel treatment he was now receiving; whereat the hearts of all were softened, and the word was passed round to hold back from pressing the attack. But Ashtar, the rebel, said, 'He is but playing with you and practising deceit,' and so he resumed the attack. There are many such traditions, but they seem to possess little authority.

Annual pilgrimage to Mecca. Dzul Hijj, A.H. XXXV. June, A.D. 656.

The solemnities of the Káaba worship were now at hand, and Othmân, still mindful of his obligation as head of Islam to provide for their due observance, once more ascended the palace roof. From thence he called the son of Abbâs, one of the faithful party guarding the entrance, to come near, and bade him assume the leadership of the band of pilgrims proceeding from Medîna;—a duty which, much against his will, as taking him away from the defence, he undertook at the Caliph's repeated command. Ayesha joined the party. She is accused of having formerly stirred up the people against Othmân. Now, at any rate, this impulsive lady not only shook herself free from the insurgents, but, in order to detach her brother Mohammed, son of Abu Bekr, also from their company, she besought him to accompany her to Mecca. But he refused.[1]

The palace stormed. 18 Dzul Hijj. June 17.

The approach of relief at last goaded the rebels to extremities, and they resolved on a final and murderous attack. A violent onset was made from all quarters, and the forlorn band of defenders (including still the sons of Aly, Zobeir, and Talha), unable longer to hold their ground, retired at Othmân's command, but not without difficulty, within the palace gate, which they closed and barred. In doing this they covered their retreat with a discharge of archery, and one of the rebels was killed thereby. Infuriated at their comrade's death, the insurgents rushed at the gate, battered it with stones, and finding it too strong, sat down to burn it. Meanwhile others, swarming in crowds from the roof of an adjoining building, gained an easier access, and, rushing along the corridor, attacked the guard still congregated within the palace gate. One was slain, Merwân was left half dead, and the rest were overpowered.[2] Othmân had retired

[1] The pilgrims, in order to reach Mecca in time for the pilgrimage (beginning on the 8th of Dzul Hijj, June 7), must have left Medîna a week or ten days previously; that is, some three weeks before the final attack on the palace.

[2] The one killed was Moghîra, a Thackîfite from Tâyif. He was a confederate of the Beni Zohra, the same who had persuaded that clan to

by himself into an inner chamber of the women's apartments; and, seated there awaiting his fate, read from the Corân, spread open on his knees. Three ruffians, sent to fulfil the bloody work, rushed in one after another upon him thus engaged. Awed by his calm demeanour, his pious words and mild appeal, each one returned as he went. 'It would be murder,' they said, 'to lay hands upon him thus.' Mohammed, son of Abu Bekr, in his hate and rage, had no such scruples. He ran in, seized him by the beard, and cried, 'The Lord abase thee, thou old dotard!' 'Let my beard go,' said Othmân, calmly; 'I am no dotard, but the aged Caliph, whom they call Othmân.' Then, in answer to a further torrent of abuse, the old man proceeded, 'Son of my brother! Thy father would not have served me so. The Lord help me! To Him I flee for refuge from thee.' The appeal touched even the unworthy son of Abu Bekr, and he too retired. The insurgent leaders, on this, crowded in themselves, smote the Caliph with their swords, and trampled on the Corân he had been reading from. Severely wounded, he yet had strength enough to stretch forth his aged arms, gather up the leaves, and press them to his bosom, while the blood flowed forth upon the sacred text.[1] Thus attacked, the faithful Nâila cast herself upon her wounded lord, and, endeavouring to shield him, received a sword-cut which severed some of the fingers from her hand, and they fell upon the ground.

And Othmân slain.

retire from the Coreishite army when it marched forth to attack Mahomet at Bedr (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 228).

Merwân received a sword-cut, which severed one of the tendons of the neck, and left him, when he recovered, with his neck stiff and shortened. The rebels were about to despatch him when his foster-mother cried out: 'Do ye seek to kill him? he is dead already; if ye would sport with and mutilate his body, that were inhuman and unlawful.' So they left him. In after days, when Merwân came to power, he showed his gratitude to this woman by giving her son a command.

[1] The blood, we are told, flowed down the leaves just touching these words: 'If they rebel, surely they are schismatics; thy Lord will swiftly avenge you.' (Sura ii. v. 138.) The appropriateness of the text, however, may of itself have suggested the story.

The band of slaves attempted his defence. One of them slew Sudân, the leader, but was immediately himself cut down and killed. Further effort was in vain. They plunged their weapons into the Caliph's body, and he fell lifeless to the ground. The infuriated mob now had their way. A scene of riot followed. They stabbed the corpse, and leaped savagely upon it; and they were proceeding to cut off the head, when the women screamed, beating their breasts and faces, and the savage crew desisted. The palace was gutted; and even Nâila, all wounded and bloody, was stripped of her veil. Just then the cry was raised, 'To the Treasury!' and suddenly all departed.[1]

Burial of Othmân.

As soon as they had left, the palace gate was barred, and thus for three days the dead bodies of Othmân, Moghîra, and the slave, lay in silence within. Then Zobeir ibn Motîm, and Hakîm ibn Hizâm (Khadîja's nephew), chief men of the Coreish, obtained leave of Aly to bury the Caliph's body.[2] In

When the insurgents first rushed in, he was at the moment reading the appropriate passage in Sura iii. v. 174. Referring to the battle of Ohod, and the danger in which Medîna was then placed, the disaffected citizens are there represented as taunting Mahomet and his followers in these words: '*Verily, the men (of Mecca) have gathered forces against you; wherefore, be afraid of the same.* But (the taunt) only increased their faith, and they said: *The Lord sufficeth for us; He is the best Protector.*' This was a favourite text of Othmân's, and he may perhaps have turned to it for comfort now that vain was the help of man.

[1] The actual murderers were Al Ghâficky, the leader, and Sudân, who was himself killed. Kinâna ibn Bishr is also named. All these belonged to the Egyptian band, which seems to have contained the most rabid of the insurgents. Amr ibn al Hamac leapt upon the body, hardly yet breathless, and inflicted nine wounds—'three for the Lord's cause, and six to satisfy his own passion.'

[2] These two were among the chief men 'whose hearts were gained over' by largesses from the booty after the battle of Honein.—*Life of Mahomet*, p. 436. Hakîm is frequently mentioned in the Prophet's biography. It was Hakîm who carried supplies to his aunt Khadîja when shut up with Mahomet in the Sheb.—*Life*, p. 100.

It is said that a party of the citizens of Medîna made an attempt to stop the funeral, but desisted on seeing that a tumult would arise. We are also told that Aly himself, on hearing of the design to molest the procession and cast stones at the mourners, did his best to prevent it. Indeed, Ablusside tradition abounds with attempts to rescue the memory of Aly from the

the dusk of evening, the funeral procession, including Zobeir, Hasan son of Aly, and the kinsmen of Othmân, wended their way to the burying-ground of Backî, outside the city. Death had not softened the rebels' hearts, and they pelted the bier with stones. Not in the graveyard itself, but in a field adjoining, the body, with a hurried service, was committed to the dust. In after years the field was added by Merwân to the main burying-ground—a spot consecrated by the remains of the heroes of Ohod, and many names famous in the early days of Islam; and there the Beni Omeyya long buried their dead around the grave of their murdered kinsman.[1]

His character

Thus, at the age of eighty-two, died Othmân, after a reign of twelve years. The misfortunes amongst which he sank bring out so sharply the failings of his character that further delineation is hardly needed. Narrow, weak, and vacillating, he had yet a kindly nature which might have made him, in less troublous times, a favourite of the people. Such, indeed, for a season he was at the beginning of his Caliphate. But afterwards he fell on evil days. The struggle between the Coreish and the rest of the Arabs was hurrying on the nation to an internecine war. The only possible safety was for the class still dominant to have opposed a strong and united front to their adversaries. By his vacillation, selfishness, and nepotism, Othmân broke up into embittered factions the aristocracy of Mecca, and threw this last chance away.

obloquy attaching to the heartless part he had been acting. For example, Masûdy gives us a tradition that when Aly heard that all was over he hastened to the palace and asked his son how it had happened—as though he could not for many days have foreseen the fatal termination to which the blockade was tending!

[1] The field was called Hashh Kaukab—the Garden of the Star.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE ELECTION OF ALY.

END OF A.H. XXXV. JUNE, A.D. 656.

Revulsion of feeling.

ON the Caliph's death, his kinsfolk, and such as had taken an active part in his defence, retired from the scene. The city was horror-struck. They had hardly anticipated, and could now with difficulty realise, the tragical end. Many who had favoured, and some who had even joined, the rebels, started back, now that the deed was done. The nearer relatives of the murdered Caliph fled to Mecca and elsewhere, with vows of vengeance. A citizen of Medîna, wrapping carefully up the severed fingers of Nâila in the blood-stained shirt of Othmân—meet symbols of revenge—carried them off to Damascus and laid them at Muâvia's feet.

Aly elected Caliph, 24 Dzul Hijj, A.H. XXXV. 23 June, A.D. 656.

For several days anarchy reigned at the capital of Islam. There was neither Caliph nor any settled government. The regicides had the entire mastery of the city. Amongst them the Egyptians were foremost in those first days of terror; and public prayers (mark of supreme authority) were conducted in the Great Mosque by their leader. Of the citizens, few ventured forth. At last, on the fifth day, the rebels insisted that, before they quitted Medîna, the citizens should exercise their right, elect a Caliph, and restore the empire to its normal state. Shrinking, no doubt, from the seething elements which Othmân's successor would have at once to face, Aly at first held back, and offered to swear allegiance to either Talha or Zobeir. But in the end, pressed by the threats of the regicides and the entreaties of

his friends, he yielded, and so, six days after the fatal tragedy, he publicly bound himself to rule 'according to the Book of the Lord,' and was saluted Caliph. Zobeir and Talha were themselves the first to take the oath. They asserted afterwards that they swore unwillingly, driven to do so through fear of the conspirators. The traditions here are so divergent that it is hardly possible to say how far this was true, or a mere afterthought.[1] Talha's arm had been disabled by the wound he received when defending Mahomet on the battle-field; unhappy auguries were now drawn from his withered hand being the first to strike the hand of Aly in taking the oath of fealty. The mass of the people followed. There were exceptions; for Aly was lenient, and, from a praiseworthy delicacy, would not press the immediate adherents of the late Caliph to swear allegiance.[2] The insurgents,

[1] My impression, on the whole, is that it was an afterthought. The narrative of those who side with Talha and Zobeir is as follows: After Othmân's death the city was for some days in the hands of the insurgents. No one ventured to accept the Caliphate. Sád and Zobeir had already quitted the city; and all the members of the Omeyya clan who were able had effected their escape to Mecca. The rebels themselves were at their wits' ends: 'If we quit Medîna,' they said, 'and no Caliph is appointed, anarchy will burst forth everywhere. It appertaineth unto you (addressing the men of Medîna) to appoint a Caliph. Wherefore look ye out a man for the throne, and make him Caliph. We give you one day's grace for the same. If ye choose him, well; but if not, then we shall slay Aly, Zobeir, and Talha, as well as a great number of you.' Alarmed at these threats, the leading citizens repaired to Aly, who, at first, bade them seek another; but they constrained him; and, as a last resource, to rid them of the insurgents, he consented. Then they drew Zobeir (who, by this time, had returned) and Talha to the Mosque, and forced them, at the point of the sword, to swear.

It seems certain that the rebels of Kûfa and Bussorah were in favour respectively of Zobeir and Talha; but that they were induced to accept Aly, either through fear (as the partisans of the two pretenders hold) of the Egyptian regicides, or because the citizens made choice of Aly.

[2] Thus Sád, the conqueror of Irâc, refused to swear till all else had done so; whereupon, Ashtar, head of the conspirators from Kûfa, threatened to behead him; but Aly said, 'Leave him alone; I will be surety for him.' Moghîra, also, and a company of the late Caliph's adherents, declined to swear, and were left unmolested. Amongst them was Hassân, the poet, and his brother Zeid (collector of the Corân), whom Othmân had appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer. Of the latter, it is said that when Othmân was first attacked, he cried to his fellow-citizens, 'Ye men of Medîna, be ye

having themselves done homage to Aly, took their leave and departed to tell the tale at Kûfa, Bussorah, and Fostât.

He declines to punish the regicides.

No bed of roses was strewn for Aly. Both at home and abroad rough and anxious work was before him. To the standing contention between the Arabs and the Coreish was now added the cry, which was soon to rend Islam, of vengeance on the regicides. Further, the red-handed treason enacted at Medîna had loosened the bonds of society. Constituted authority was set at naught. Bands of Bedouins, scenting from afar the approach of anarchy and the chance of plunder, hung about the city. They were bidden to depart; but encouraged by the servile population, which, broken loose during the insurrection, still kept aloof from their masters, they refused.[1] Aly was pressed on many sides, by those who held him bound by his accession-oath, to vindicate the majesty of the Divine law, and to punish the wicked men who had imbrued their hands in the blood of Othmân. Even Talha and Zobeir, awakening too late to the portentous nature of the crime enacted before their eyes and hardly against their will, urged this. 'My brothers,' replied Aly, 'I am not indifferent to what ye say. But I am

Ansârs (Helpers) *of the Lord* for the second time, even as ye were Ansârs of His Prophet at the first.' But Abu Ayûb, another of the citizens, made answer and said, 'Verily, he shall get no help from us. Let the multitude of his train-band slaves be his *Ansârs*!'

[1] This servile population (Sabâya or 'captives') had been pouring for years in a continuous stream, during the campaigns, into Medîna. They were employed as domestic servants, warders, body-guards, &c. Some followed trades, in quasi-freedom, paying the profits to their masters. They mostly embraced the Moslem faith because of the privileges it conferred. On the outbreak they became insubordinate, and broke away into a defiant attitude. This would occur the more readily as they formed the guards of the treasury and mansions of the great men; and, being the only trained force at Medîna, no doubt themselves felt their power. We find them similarly taking part in the outbreak at Bussorah. Like the Janissaries or Memlûk of later days, they were a petulant brood. Immediately on homage being done to Aly, they are said to have lampooned him in minatory verses, to which Aly (not to be outdone by the poetry even of slaves) replied in extempore couplets. Proclamation was made that slaves not returning to their masters would be treated as outlaws, but it had no effect.

helpless. These wild Bedouins and rampant slaves will have their way. What is this but an outburst of Paganism long suppressed—a return, for the moment, of "the days of Ignorance," a work of Satan? Just now they are beyond my power. Let us wait; and the Lord will guide us.' This waiting, hesitating mood was the bane of Aly's life. He loved ease; and though sometimes obstinate and self-willed, his ordinary principle was that things left to themselves would mend.

The Coreish alarmed.

The Coreish were anxious and alarmed. The revolt, under the veil of discontent at the ungodly rule of Othmân, was now (they said) taking a far wider range. The Bedouins were becoming impatient of the control of the Coreishite aristocracy; and that which had happened to the Beni Qmeyya—now forced to fly Medîna—might happen at any moment to the whole body of the Coreish. Yet Aly, though professing to denounce the attack of the regicides as high treason, took no steps to punish it, but temporised. A prompt and vigorous pursuit of the traitors would no doubt have been joined in, heart and soul, by Muâvia and by the whole nobility of Islam. But Aly preferred to let the vessel drift, and so it was drawn rapidly into the vortex of rebellion.

Aly seeks to supersede Muâvia in Syria.

The next matter which pressed for immediate settlement was the confirmation, or otherwise the supersession, of the various governors of provinces and cities; and here Aly, turning a deaf ear to his friends, proved himself wayward and precipitate. When Ibn Abbâs returned from the pilgrimage at Mecca (to the presidency at which he had been deputed by the late Caliph), he found that Moghîra had been wisely urging Aly to retain the governors generally in their posts, till, at the least, the people throughout the empire had recognised his succession to the throne. But Aly had flatly refused.[1] Ibn Abbâs now pressed the same view: 'At any rate,' he said, 'retain Muâvia; there is a special reason for

[1] The tradition runs that Moghîra, at the first, gave sound and sincere

it; Omar, and not Othmân, placed him there; and all Syria followeth after him.' The advice, coming from so near and distinguished a kinsman of his own, deserved the consideration of Aly. But he answered sharply, 'Nay; I shall not confirm him even for a single day.' 'If thou depose him,' reasoned his friend, 'the Syrians will question thine election: and, worse, they may accuse thee of the blood of Othmân, and, as one man, rise up against thee. Confirm him in his government, and they care not who is Caliph. When thou art firmly seated, depose him if thou wilt. It will be easy with thee then.' 'Never,' answered Aly, 'he shall have nought but the sword from me.' 'Thou art brave,' Ibn Abbâs replied, 'but innocent of the craft of war; and hath not the Prophet himself said, *What is war but a game of deception?*'[1] 'That is true,' responded Aly, 'but I will have none of the aid that cometh from Muâvia.' 'Then,' said Ibn Abbâs, 'thou hadst better depart to thy property at Yenbó, and close the gates of thy stronghold behind thee; for everywhere the Bedouins are hounding along; and if thou makest the rest of the people thine enemies, these will find thee alone, and will surely lay the blood of Othmân at thy door.' 'Come,' said Aly, trying another line, 'thou shalt go forth thyself to Syria. See, now, I have appointed thee.' 'That,' replied Ibn Abbâs, 'can never be. Muâvia would surely behead me or cast me into prison because of Othmân's death, and my being akin to thee. Hearken to me, and make terms with him ere it be too late.' But Aly turned a deaf ear to his appeal.[2]

advice to this effect; but that, finding Aly obstinately opposed to it, he returned next day, saying that, on reflection, he had changed his mind. When Ibn Abbâs came, Aly told him that Moghîra had, at the first, attempted to deceive him, but on the second day had spoken true, and advised him to put in his own men. 'Not so,' said Ibn Abbâs; 'just the reverse. It was the truth which he spake at the first; the last was not his true opinion.' And so it turned out; for Moghîra, finding his advice disregarded, departed to join the malcontents at Mecca.

[1] *Life of Mahomet*, pp. 324 and 527.

[2] I have given this conference fully, because, in substance at least, it

Aly appoints new governors throughout the empire. Moharram, A.H. XXXVI. July, A.D. 656.

Acting on these wayward impulses, Aly sent men of his own to replace the existing governors in the chief commands throughout the empire. In most places they met with but a sorry reception. At Bussorah, Ibn Aámir, unwilling to provoke hostilities, retired, and his successor, Othmân ibn Honeif, entered unopposed; but the faction which clung to the memory of the late Caliph was as strong at Bussorah as that which favoured Aly, while a third party waited to see how the tide of public opinion might run at Medîna. In Egypt it was much the same. Cays, appointed to the command, was a singularly wise and able ruler; but he only succeeded in passing the frontier garrison by feigning attachment to the cause of Othmân; while a strong and aggressive faction occupied the district of Kharanba, swearing that they would not submit until the regicides were brought to justice. In Yemen, the new governor obtained possession, but only after Yála, his predecessor, had carried off to Mecca all the treasure. The governors-elect of Aly who attempted to enter Kûfa and the province of Syria, met with a rough reception on the border, and were fortunate in escaping with their lives back again to Medîna.

Aly sends letters to Muâvia and Abu Mûsa.

Dispirited by these reports, Aly again took counsel with Talha and Zobeir. The sedition, he said, which he had apprehended, was already kindled, and would spread like wild-fire, catching whatever came in its way. 'Then,' replied they, 'let us depart, that we may do thee service in the field.' 'Wait,' answered Aly; 'the cautery must be the last resort.' So he resolved, in the first instance, to address letters to Muâvia, and also to Abu Mûsa at Kûfa, demanding their allegiance. Abu Mûsa replied in loyal terms, but at the same time bade the Caliph beware of the spirit of

shows the impracticable bent of Aly's mind which quickly drew on the civil war. It is also not unlikely in itself. The purport of such a conversation would become known; and, moreover, besides this and one or two other uncertain conversations, we have little or nothing to explain the early events of Aly's Caliphate, and the motives which actuated him.

disaffection which in Kûfa was rife around him. With Syria, all communication was cut off; weeks elapsed, and there was no reply. In truth, a strange scene was being enacted there.

Emblems of vengeance suspended on the pulpit at Damascus.

Muâvia had no sooner received the emblems of his Master's murder—the gory shirt and Nâila's mangled fingers—than he hung them up on the pulpit of the Great Mosque at Damascus. There suspended, they remained a spectacle maddening the Syrians to a bloody revenge.[1] Still they took no immediate action. Biding their time, they waited to see what the new Caliph might do. Aly, had he been wise, would have used such allies to take vengeance at once on the conspirators, and at the same time crush the rising democracy and disaffection of the Arab tribes. In this work Syria would have been his strongest stand-by; for it never suffered from the Bedouin turbulence which kept Irâc and Egypt in continual turmoil. In the early campaigns, Syria was the favourite field of the Coreish, who, settling there in larger proportion than elsewhere, found their influence, in consequence, better recognised. Moreover, the conquering race inhabited the ancient Syrian cities in common with the Christian population, which had surrendered, for the most part, on favourable terms. Society was thus throughout all classes of the community orderly and loyal, whereas on the banks of the Euphrates the settlements of Bussorah and Kûfa were filled with wild and headstrong Arab tribes who regarded the vanquished lands as their patrimony. Law prevailed in Syria; in Irâc and Egypt, the pride and petulance of arms. Syria was, moreover, attached to its Coreishite governors of the Omeyyad stock, and remained thus faithful to the end.

The Syrians had not long to wait for the outcome of Aly's plans. The abortive attempt to supersede Muâvia, and

[1] Amru, it is said, pressed this course upon Muâvia, saying, in his proverbial style, 'Show the dam her foal, it will stir her bowels.'

the refusal to arraign the regicides, gave colour to the charge of collusion; and, with the bloody shirt before their eyes, the Syrians soon raised that cry against the Caliph. The majesty of outraged law must be vindicated; and if the assassins were not pursued to justice, then who but Aly was responsible for the failure? Damascus was in this excited temper when Aly's letter was handed to Muâvia. At the first no answer was vouchsafed. The envoy was kept in waiting from day to day to witness the gathering storm. At last Muâvia sent a despatch; and a stranger document, perhaps, was never seen. It bore, as was usual, the seal of state outside upon the cover, which was superscribed with this address—*From Muâvia to Aly.* It contained no other word, but was all blank within. The despatch was carried by Cabîsa, a chief of the Beni Abs, and with him the envoy was given permission to depart. Arriving at Medîna just three months after Othmân's death, Cabîsa presented the letter to Aly, who read the address, and, breaking open the seal, found the despatch all blank within. 'What meaneth this?' cried Aly, starting at the unwonted sight;—'let the enigma be explained.' Cabîsa, instructed by his Master, inquired whether his life was safe. 'It is safe,' answered Aly; 'the person of an ambassador is sacred. Speak on.' 'Know then,' proceeded the envoy, 'that but now I left behind me, weeping under the blood-stained shirt of Othmân, by the pulpit of the Great Mosque at Damascus, sixty thousand warriors, all bent on revenging the Caliph's death—and revenging it on thee!' 'What!' exclaimed Aly, aghast, '*on me*! Seest thou not that I am powerless to pursue the murderers? Oh, Lord! I take Thee to witness that I am guiltless of Othmân's blood. Begone! See, thy life is safe.' As the Absite chief withdrew, the petulant slaves and rabble shouted after him, 'Slay the dog; slay the envoy of dogs!' He turned, and, apostrophising the Coreish, cried at the pitch of his voice, 'Children of Modhar! Children of Cays!

Muâvia sends defiant answer to Aly's letter, Safar, A.H. XXXVI. August, A.D. 656.

The horse and the bow! Four thousand picked warriors are close at hand. See to your camels and your horses!'

Aly resolves to attack Muâvia and invade Syria.

Medîna was startled by the envoy's cry, only as Mecca had been startled by the voice of Dham-dham at the battle of Bedr, four-and-thirty years before. The time was come when Aly could no longer put his decision off. Hasan, ever poor in spirit, counselled his father to wait; but Aly saw too plainly that the hour for action was now or never. He gave vent to his troubled soul in martial lines which were soon in everyone's mouth, and from which the people first learned his resolve to make the sword the arbiter betwixt Muâvia and himself. An expedition against Syria was proclaimed. Captains were appointed to command the various companies of the expected levies, and banners were presented to them by Aly; but he was careful to name no one who had taken any part in the attack on Othmân.[1] Orders were also sent to Kûfa, Bussorah, and Egypt, to raise troops for the war. Having made these preparations, Aly mounted the pulpit and harangued the citizens of Medîna. If they failed to fight now, he told them, the power would pass away from them, never more to be regained. 'Fight, then, against the cursed schismatics, who would destroy the unity of Islam and rend in twain the body of the Faithful. Haply the Lord will set that right which the nations of the earth are setting wrong.' But the people did not respond to the appeal, and the ranks were slow of filling.

Talha and Zobeir depart to Mecca.

Talha and Zobeir, when they saw how affairs were drifting, again asked that they might be allowed to quit Medîna. With Aly's leave, they now set out for Mecca, on pretext of performing the Lesser Pilgrimage.

[1] The officers appointed were his cousin Abdallah ibn Abbâs, a faithful adherent, and his brother Cutham; Omar, son of Abu Salma (half-brother of Omm Salma, the Prophet's widow); Abu Leila, nephew of Abu Obeida; Aly's own son Mohammed, son of his Hanifite wife, &c.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

REBELLION AT BUSSORAH.

A.H. XXXVI. A.D. 656.

Work nearer home.

BUT, before crossing arms with Muâvia, heavy work was still in store for Aly.

Ayesha retires to Mecca.

On her way back from the pilgrimage at Mecca, Ayesha was met by the tidings of Othmân's murder and of Aly's accession to the Caliphate. 'Carry me back,' forthwith cried the incensed and impetuous lady; 'carry me back to Mecca. They have murdered the Câliph. I will avenge his blood.'

And propagates sedition there.

In the early period of Othmân's troubles, Ayesha, like the rest of the world, is said to have contributed her share towards fomenting public discontent. We are told that she even abetted the conspirators, among whom (as we have seen) her brother Mohammed son of Abu Bekr was a chief leader. But however this may have been, she certainly was no party to the factious proceedings so soon as they began to be pressed to cruel extremities; and she had, in fact, sought to detach her brother from them by carrying him off with her to Mecca. Vain and factious, she had never forgiven the cold and unhandsome conduct towards her of Aly when, on the occasion of the misadventure with Safwân, her virtue had been doubted by the Prophet;[1] and now she would gladly have seen Zobeir Caliph in the place of Aly. Instead, therefore, of proceeding onwards to her home at Medîna, she returned straightway to Mecca. There the disaffected (who ever gravitated for safety to the Sanctuary) gathered around her, while from her

[1] For this passage in the Prophet's life see *Life of Mahomet*, pp. 311 *et seq.*

veiled retreat she plotted the revenge of Othmân, and with shrill voice loudly harangued her audience on the enormous crime that had desecrated the Prophet's home and resting-place.[1]

Zobeir and Talha, with Ayesha, march on Bussorah, Rabî II. A.H. XXXVI. A.D. 656.

Thus when Zobeir and Talha reached Mecca, they found sedition well in the ascendant. The numerous members of the Omeyyad family, who had fled on the Caliph's death from Medîna, and the adherents of that powerful House still residing at Mecca, as well as the factious and discontented population at large, listened eagerly to the tale of their distinguished visitors. 'They had left the men of Medîna,' they said, 'plunged in perplexity. Right and wrong had been so confounded that the people knew not which way to go. It was therefore for the citizens of Mecca now to lead, and to punish the traitors who had slain their Caliph.' The standard of rebellion was raised, and many flocked to join it. Bussorah was chosen as the first object of attack. It was a city which had always favoured the claims of Talha; and Ibn Aâmir, the late governor, had an influential following there. The treasure which he had brought away with him, as well as that carried off by Alâ from Yemen, was now expended in equipping the force, and providing carriage for the more needy followers. Ayesha,

[1] We are treading now on specially factious ground, and have to weigh with care the bias of tradition which represents Ayesha as suddenly converted from a deadly enemy of Othmân into the champion of his memory. Thus, when, on receiving the tidings of the murder on the way back from Mecca, she declared that she would avenge his death: 'What!' cried her informant, startled by her zeal; 'is this thy speech now, whilst but yesterday thou wast foremost to press the attack upon him as an apostate?' 'Yea,' she replied; 'but even now he repented him of that which they laid to his charge, and yet after that they slew him.' In reply, her informant recited these verses: 'Thou wast the first to foment the discontent. Thou commandedst us to slay the prince for his apostasy, and now, &c.' How far this has been invented (possibly as a foil to Aly's equally strange and inconsistent conduct), or whether the inconsistency in Ayesha's conduct was really as strange as here represented, it is difficult to say. Anyhow, it must be admitted that Ayesha was a jealous, violent, intriguing woman, a character that may well account for much that would otherwise appear strange.

spurning the restraints of her sex, prepared to join the campaign and to stir up the people of Bussorah, as she had stirred up those of Mecca. Haphsa, daughter of Omar, another of 'the Mothers of the Faithful,' was with difficulty restrained by her brother (who had just fled from Medîna, and held aloof from either side) from accompanying her sister-widow. At length, some four months after Othmân's death, the rebel army set out 3,000 strong, of whom a thousand were men of Mecca and Medîna. Ayesha travelled in her litter on a camel, which was destined to give its name to the first engagement in the civil war.[1] The other widows of Mahomet residing at Mecca accompanied her a little way, and then returned. As they parted, the whole company, men and women, gave vent to their feelings, and wept bitterly at the louring fortunes of Islam; 'there was no such weeping, before or after, as then; so that it was called *The Day of Tears*.'[2]

Ambition mingled with cry for revenge.

Questions even now began to arise as to which of the two, Talha or Zobeir, would in event of victory be the Caliph; but Ayesha, staying the strife, as premature, desired that Abdallah son of Zobeir should lead the prayers; and it was given out that, if success should crown their efforts, the choice of the future Caliph would be left, as heretofore, in the hands of the men of Medîna.[3] Saîd, with a body of

[1] This famous camel is an object of special interest to tradition. Some say it was bought for Ayesha in Yemen; others, that it belonged to the Orni guide who piloted the expedition; and that, in addition to a large sum for his services, he got the camel purchased for Ayesha in exchange for his own.

[2] The women of Mecca accompanied Ayesha as far as Dzât Irc. Some of Mahomet's widows may have been at Mecca just then for the pilgrimage, and, in the present troubled state of Medîna, they may have preferred to stay on there. Perhaps some of them may have settled permanently in the Holy City. On the other hand, we know from a previous notice that Omm Habîba, at any rate, still resided at Modîna.

[3] Saîd inquired of Talha and Zobeir which of them was to be the Caliph. 'Whichever,' was the answer, 'the people may choose.' 'But,' replied Saîd, 'if ye go forth as the avengers of the blood of Othmân, then the succession should of right devolve upon his sons,' two of whom were with the rebel force.

the rebel troops, distrusting the motives of the leaders, turned aside at the last moment, and went back to Mecca. As the cavalcade swept by him, shouting that they were on their way to destroy the murderers of Othmân root and branch, Saîd cried out to Merwân: 'Whither away? the proper objects your vengeance are on the humps of their camels before your eyes.[1] Slay these, and return to your homes!' It is not improbable that with many of the party, and notably with Talha and Zobeir, ambition, the ruling motive, was mistaken for the desire of a just revenge. In the whirl of passion and intrigue, party-cry too often takes the place of reason; and we need not doubt that both leaders and followers had wrought themselves up into the belief that punishment of the high treason enacted at Medîna was their real object.

Ayesha's qualms of conscience.

Yet, notwithstanding all this parade of justice, the conscience of Ayesha was ill at ease. As they journeyed through the desert, her camel-driver beguiled the tedium of the long autumn nights by calling out the names of the hills and vales along which they passed. Approaching a Bedouin settlement the dogs as usual began to howl;—'*The Valley of* HAWÂB!' cried the guide. Ayesha started and screamed. Something dreadful which Mahomet had spoken, about those at whom the dogs of Hawâb should bark, flashed across her memory or imagination. 'Carry me back,' she cried; and, making her camel kneel, she hastily alighted from her litter. 'Alas and alas!' she continued, 'for I heard the Prophet say, reproaching us, as he sat surrounded by his wives one day: "*O that I knew which amongst you it is at whom the dogs of Hawâb will bark!*" It is me! I am the wretched Woman of Hawâb. I declare that I will not take another step on this ill-omened expedi-

'That,' they answered, 'it will be for the chief men of Medîna eventually to settle amongst them.'

[1] Meaning Talha and Zobeir themselves, and intimating that these had had as much hand in fomenting the insurrection, and were as responsible for its fatal result, as anybody else.

tion.' They sought to persuade her that the guide had mistaken the name; but she refused to stir, and the army halted for her a whole day. In despair, they bethought them of a stratagem. The following night, they raised the cry that [illegible] was upon them. The greater terror prevailing, Ayesha [illegible]ened to her camel, and the march was resumed.

Aly fails to intercept the rebels.

The alarm, feigned for the purpose, was not, however, altogether groundless. When rumours of the defection first reached Medîna, Aly declared that he would not move against the malcontents at Mecca, so long as no overt act of rebellion threatened the unity of Islam. But shortly after, a message arrived from the widow of Abbâs[1] at Mecca, with news of the design against Bussorah. At the first, Aly was disposed to congratulate himself that the conspirators had not made Kûfa, with its greater Bedouin population, their object. The son of Abbâs, however, pointed out that Bussorah was really the more dangerous of the two, because fewer of the leading chiefs were there, able as at Kûfa, if they chose, to curb the people and repress rebellion. Aly admitted the truth of this; and, now thoroughly alarmed, gave orders that the Syrian column should march instead to Nejd, hoping thereby to intercept the rebels on their way to Bussorah. But the people still hung back. Finding that Abdallah son of Omar had disappeared, Aly, in alarm lest he too should have gone to join the rebels, sent scouts in all directions after him. Meanwhile his own daughter, Omm Kolthûm, widow of Omar, sent to assure her father that Abdallah had really gone on pilgrimage to Mecca, and was altogether neutral; whereupon Aly, ashamed of his apprehensions, recalled the scouts.[2] At last a column of 900 men was got together, at the head of

[1] Omm al Fadhl.

[2] The incident is adduced to show the alarm of Aly. He had sent for Abdallah, Omar's son, who declined to pledge himself to join the army against the rebels of Bussorah till he saw what the other citizens of Medîna did. On this he prepared to leave for Mecca, assuring his stepmother (Aly's daughter) that he meant to keep aloof from the rebels, which he did.

which Aly himself marched to Nejd.[1] But, although they used all expedition on the road, they found on reaching Rabadza that the insurgents had already passed. Not being equipped for further advance, Aly halted at Dzu Câr. Messengers were sent to Kûfa, Egypt, and elsewhere, demanding reinforcements; and for these the Caliph waited, in his camp, before he ventured forwards.

The rebels attack Bussorah.

To return to Ayesha. The insurgent army, having resumed its march, reached Bussorah, and encamped close by. Messages were exchanged, and immediately on Ibn Honeif, the governor, becoming aware that the cry of vengeance on the regicides covered designs against his Master, he called together an assembly to try the temper of the people. Finding from the uproar that the strangers had a strong party in the city, he put on his armour, and, followed by the larger portion of the citizens, went forth to meet Ayesha, who, on her side, was joined from the town by the insurgent faction. A parley ensued. Talha, the favourite at Bussorah, Zobeir, and even Ayesha, with her shrill and powerful voice, declaimed against the murderers of Othmân, and demanded justice. The other side were equally loud in their protestations against the expedition. It was a shame, they said, and a slight on the memory of the Prophet, for Ayesha to forego the sanctity of the Veil, and the proprieties of 'the Motherhood of the Faithful.' Aly had been duly elected, and saluted Caliph; and now Talha and Zobeir were treacherously violating the allegiance which they had been the first to swear. These both protested that the oath had been forced upon them. On this point the controversy turned; and from words they fell to blows. Night interposed; but fighting was resumed the following day, and with so serious a loss to the loyalists that a truce was called, and an agreement come to, on the

[1] This column, which was got up in haste and with difficulty (for there was no enthusiasm at any time for Aly), was composed chiefly of men belonging to Kûfa and Bussorah in Aly's interest. What these were doing then at Medîna does not appear.

understanding that the facts should be ascertained from Medîna. If it were shown that force had been put upon the two leaders to take the oath, then Ibn Honeif would retire and leave the city in their hands. An envoy accredited by either side was accordingly deputed to Medîna. He arrived there while Aly was absent in his camp, and forthwith proclaimed the commission he was charged with, before the assembled city. The people at first were silent. At last Osâma ibn Zeid, a Companion of the highest rank,[1] declared that both Talha and Zobeir had done homage under compulsion, whereupon a great tumult arose; and the envoy, having seen and heard enough to prove diversity of opinion on the subject, took his leave.

Reference to Medîna on question of compulsion.

When tidings of these things reached Aly, who was with his army in Nejd, he addressed a letter to Ibn Honeif: 'There was no compulsion,' he wrote; 'neither of these my adversaries was constrained otherwise than by the will of the majority. By the Lord! if their object be to make me abdicate, they are without excuse; if it be any other thing, I am ready to consider it.' So when the envoy returned, and upon his report the insurgents called on Ibn Honeif to evacuate the city according to agreement, he produced the Caliph's letter, and refused. But the rebels had already obtained the footing they desired within the city. Arming themselves, they repaired to the Mosque for evening service, and, the night being dark and stormy, were not perceived until they had overpowered the body-guard, entered the adjoining palace, and made Ibn Honeif a prisoner. On the following day, a severe conflict raged throughout the city, which ended in the complete discomfiture with heavy loss of Aly's party, and so the government passed into the hands of Talha and Zobeir. True to their ostensible object, these now made proclamation that every citizen who had engaged in the attack on Othmân should be brought forth and executed.

Fighting at Bussorah. City occupied by Zobeir and Talha.

24 Rabî II. A.H. XXXVI. Oct. 19, A.D. 656.

[1] The commander of the first campaign after Mahomet's death.

The order was carried rigorously out, and great numbers were put to death.[1] The life of Ibn Honeif was, after some hesitation, spared. He was set at liberty, his head and beard shaven, and his eyelashes and moustaches clipped; and in this sorry plight the ousted governor made the best of his way to Aly.

Ayesha's messages to Kûfa, &c.

The insurgents communicated tidings of their success to Syria. And Ayesha wrote letters to Kûfa, Medîna, and Yemen, seeking to detach the people from their allegiance to Aly, and stir them up to avenge the death of Othmân.

Apathy of Bussorah towards Talha and Zobeir.

Meanwhile the citizens of Bussorah swore allegiance to Talha and Zobeir conjointly. To avoid all appearance of rivalry, the public prayers were conducted alternately by a son of each. Little active sympathy was evoked by the usurpers. Talha proclaimed an expedition to proceed against Aly. But no one responded to the call, and his spirit fell. Thus some weeks passed uneasily, till the city was aroused by the announcement that Aly with a great army was in full march upon it.

[1] Only one man of the band from Bussorah that attacked Othmân, the warrior Horeûs, escaped, at the intercession of the Beni Sâd.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

BATTLE OF THE CAMEL.

JUMAD II., A.H. XXXVI. DECEMBER, A.D. 656.

Aly, strengthened by contingent from Kûfa, advances on Bussorah, Jumâd II. A.H. XXXVI. Nov. A.D. 656.

FINDING that the insurgent troops, with Ayesha, Zobeir, and Talha, had already passed, Aly, as we have seen, halted for a while at Dzu Câr in Nejd, with the view of strengthening his army; for, although joined on his march by the Beni Tay and some other loyal tribes, he still felt too weak for an offensive step. To Kûfa he addressed a special summons, inhabited as it was by many veteran Companions on whose loyalty to the Caliphate he might reasonably depend; and he added force to the call by holding out the prospect that their city should be the seat of his government. 'See,' he wrote to them, 'have I not chosen Kûfa before all the cities for mine own? Unto you do I look, in these hard times, for succour, if haply peace and unity again prevail as it behoveth among brethren in the Faith.' But the summons was at the first unheeded. The overgrown city was made up of many factions; and from some of these the message of Ayesha, demanding revenge for Othmân's blood, had already found response. Abu Mûsa was altogether unequal to the emergency. Loyal to the memory of the murdered Caliph, he yet sought to allay the ferment by a neutral course, and urged the citizens to join neither party, but remain at home. A second deputation meeting with no better success, the Caliph bethought him of sending his eldest son, in company with Ammâr, the former Governor of Kûfa, to urge his cause. The personal appeal of Hasan, the grandson of the Prophet (albeit a

spiritless creature devoted only to his harem), had the desired effect.[1] The chord of loyalty in the fickle city's heart was touched; a tumult arose, and Abu Mûsa, unable to maintain his weak neutrality, was deposed. The Arab tribes rallied, and for the moment heartily, around such noted leaders as Cacâa, and Adî the son of Hâtim. And soon ten thousand men, partly by land, partly embarking on the river, set out to join the Caliph, who, advancing slowly from Dzu Câr, awaited their arrival. Thus reinforced, Aly was able to take the field effectively, and to march on the rebellious city with an imposing force.

Aly opens negotiations with Talha and Zobeir.

Bussorah itself was not wholly hostile. A considerable portion of the Beni Bekr and Abd al Cays went forth and joined the camp of Aly. The Beni Temîm, another tribe inhabiting the city, perplexed by conflicting obligations, stood aloof, and

[1] Abu Mûsa, Governor of Kûfa, abused Ammâr, the envoy of Aly, as a murderer. When urged by Hasan (whom on his arrival he embraced affectionately) to support his father in putting down the dissension that rent the people, Abu Mûsa replied that he had heard the Prophet say that 'in the event of sedition, walking was better than riding, standing better than walking, and sitting better than either.' He exhorted the citizens, therefore, to adopt this maxim, and, following the example of the Coreish, to sit still at home;—'if they studied their eternal interests, they would do thie; if only their temporal interests, they would go forth and fight.' A tumult arose; the palace was sacked, and he was deposed.

Hasan, spite of his want of ambition, must have managed the business well, especially after the failure of the previous deputations, which consisted of such able men as Mohammed, son of Abu Bekr, the sons of Abbâs and Jafar, and Ashtar the arch-regicide.

The spiritless *rôle* assigned by tradition to Hasan is illustrated by a conversation which passed between him and his father at Dzu Câr. *Hasan*: 'Thou hast ever neglected my advice, my father, and now thou wilt be deserted all round, and slain.' *Aly*: 'And thou never ceasest whining like a girl. What advice of thine have I not followed?' Hasan replied that his father should have quitted Medîna before Othmân was slain; after the murder, he should not have accepted the Caliphate till the provinces had agreed in his nomination; and now that Talha and Zobeir had risen up, he should have stayed at home, and let them take the first offensive step. To the first point Aly answered that at the time he was himself besieged, and could not, even if he had so wished, escape from Medîna; that he had been regularly elected, and would fight it out to the end; that as for staying at home, he would have been like a hyæna, baited by enemies on all sides; and that if he did not look after his own interests, he saw no one else who would do so for him. The conversation may be fictitious, but it entirely accords with Hasan's poor and unaspiring character.

encamped, under their leader Ahnaf, within a few miles of the city, watched what the result might be. Still the numbers bound to the insurgent cause nearly equalled the Caliph's army; and on its approach they marched forth with Talha and Zobeir at their head, and Ayesha in a well-fenced litter on her camel. But Aly's thoughts were for peace, if it were possible. He was a man of compromise; and here he was ready, in the interests of Islam, magnanimously to forget the insult offered to his throne. Apart, indeed, from personal jealousies, there was no disagreement sufficient to bar the hope of reconciliation. The cry of Talha and Zobeir was for vengeance against the murderers of Othmân. As yet, Aly did not deny that justice should be dealt out against them. But he was obliged to temporise. He had in his army great numbers of these very men, and he felt that to inflict punishment on them, as his adversaries required, would be, for the present at least, impossible. Holding these views, he halted while still some little way from Bussorah, and sent forward Cacâa to expostulate with Talha and Zobeir. 'Ye have slain six hundred men of Bussorah,' said Cacâa to them, 'for the blood of Othmân; and lo! to avenge *their* blood, six thousand more have started up. Where in this internecine work are ye to stop? It is peace and repose that Islam needeth. Give that, and again the majesty of law shall be set up, and the guilty brought to justice.' As he spoke, the truth flashed on the minds of Zobeir and Talha, and even of Ayesha; and they returned word that if these really were the sentiments of Aly, they were ready to submit. After several days were spent in such negotiations, Aly, rejoicing at the prospect of a bloodless compromise, advanced.

Tactics of the regicides.

But as we have seen, Aly's army, recruited at random from the Bedouin settlements, comprised a great number of notorious regicides. Afraid of bringing these into contact with the heated army of his opponents, which was still

breathing out fire and slaughter against them, Aly gave command that none who had shared in the attack on Othmân should for the present accompany him in his advance.[1] These in their turn, with Ashtar and Ibn Sawda at their head, became alarmed. Talha's adherents, sworn to their destruction, were double their number. If peace, then, were patched up, as was now proposed, what were they all but doomed men? Reasoning thus, they held a secret conclave, and came to the conclusion that their only safety lay in precipitating hostilities, and thus forcing Aly's hand to crush their enemies. Accordingly, when the Caliph marched, they remained behind, but with the resolve that, when the right moment came, they would advance and throw themselves upon the enemy.

Continued peaceful negotiations.

The army of Bussorah, numbering from twenty to thirty thousand men, remained encamped on the outskirts of the city. Aly's force, advancing unopposed, halted within sight of them. The citizens, as well as Talha and Zobeir, sent deputations to the Caliph; and negotiations for peace went on, evidently of a sincere and substantial character. Aly himself approached on horseback, and Talha with Zobeir rode forth to confer with him. 'Wherefore came ye out?' asked Aly; 'did ye not swear homage to me?' 'Yea,' replied Talha, 'but with the sword over our necks; and now our demand is that justice be executed against the regicides.' Thereupon Aly said that he too held them guilty; and in no measured terms exclaimed, 'The Lord blast the murderers of Othmân!' But they must bide their time. Zobeir on his side was softened by a passage from some conversation of the Prophet recalled by Aly to his mind; and he bound himself by an oath that he would not fight.[2] Then they all retired.

[1] Mohammed son of Abu Bekr, the regicide, was with Aly during the impending battle, which would seem to show that all those concerned in the insurrection against Othmân were not kept back. Possibly the order applied only to the Bedouins from Kûfa that were so concerned.

[2] Among other things, Aly said to Zobeir: 'Dost thou remember the day

And both armies, understanding that pacific negotiations were in progress between their leaders, went to rest that night in such security as they had not felt for many weeks.

Armies both surprised by regicides.

But the spell was rudely broken. Towards morning, a sudden shock changed the scene. The regicides, finding that the time for action was fully come, had, during the night, carried their design into execution. Squadron upon squadron of Bedouin lances bore down, while it was yet dark, upon the Bussorah tents, and in a moment all was confusion. Each camp believed that it was being treacherously attacked by the other; and the dawn found both armies drawn up, just as the conspirators desired, in mortal combat one against the other. In vain Aly, perceiving the cause, endeavoured to hold back his men. The sense of treachery embittered the conflict. It was a strange engagement, and the first occasion on which Moslems crossed swords with Moslems. It resembled one of the deadly battles of old Arab times,

when we both were with the Prophet among the Beni Ghanam; and he looked on me and smiled, and I smiled in return; and thou saidst to him, "Do not allow the son of Abu Tâlib to vapour thus;" and he answered, "It is no vapouring to quarrel about; thou doest him an injustice"?' And Zobeir was touched.

The attitude of Talha and Zobeir is variously represented. They both appear to have assented to Aly's proposals; and (notwithstanding Talha's speech about compulsory swearing of allegiance) to have continued peaceful negotiations.

On the other hand, Abdallah son of Zobeir manifests the same ambitious spirit which led him many years afterwards into rebellion, and at one time nearly gained for him the Caliphate. He is represented as now taunting his father with faint-heartedness in swearing to Aly that he would not fight; and even persuading him to release himself from the oath by the legal substitution of freeing a slave.

Again, it is said that Zobeir was staggered when he heard that Ammâr was in the field against him, in consequence of Mahomet's having once said that *Ammâr would be slain by an ungodly host* (a matter of which we shall hear more below). The general tenor of tradition is, that, from whatever cause, he retired, without fighting, into the neighbouring valley, and there met his death.

It is very difficult to weave a narrative at once faithful and consistent out of all this. The conversations of the rebel leaders with Aly must have been to a great extent conjectural; and the surprise of both armies no doubt adds to the confusion of the narrative as given by our authorities. The general outline, however, is established.

only that for tribal rivalry were now substituted other passions. The clans were broken up, and it became rather a contest between the two rival settlements: 'The Beni Rabia of Kûfa fought against the Beni Rabia of Bussorah, the Beni Modhar of the one against the Beni Modhar of the other;' and so on, we are told, with the various tribes of the Peninsula, and even with families, one part arrayed against the other. The Kûfa ranks were urged on by the regicides, who felt that, unless Aly conquered, they were altogether lost. The field was contested with an obstinacy and sanguinary issue which can be only thus accounted for. An eye-witness tells us that 'when the opposing sides came breast to breast, it was with a furious shock, the noise whereof was like that of washermen at the ghaut.'[1] The attitude of the leaders was in marked contrast with the bitter struggle of the ranks. Zobeir, half-hearted since his interview with Aly, had left the battle-field according to his promise, and was killed in an adjoining valley by a soldier of Ahnaf's neutral company. Talha, disabled by an arrow in the leg, was carried into Bussorah, where he died. Bereft of their leaders, the insurgent troops gave way. They were falling back upon the city, when they passed by the camel of Ayesha, stationed in the rear. Attacked fiercely all round, she was screaming unceasingly, with fruitless energy, from within her litter, the old cry, 'Slay the murderers of Othmân.' The word ran through the retiring ranks, that 'the Mother of the Faithful was in peril,' and they gallantly stayed their flight to rescue her. Long and cruelly the renewed conflict raged around the fated camel. One after another, brave warriors rushed to seize the standard by its side, and one after another they were cut down. Of the Coreish, seventy perished by the bridle. At last, Aly, perceiving that the camel was the rallying point of his enemy, sent one of his captains to hamstring and disable it. With a loud scream, the animal

Zobeir and Talha killed.

[1] The Eastern traveller will recognise and appreciate the illustration.

fell to the ground.[1] The struggle ceased and the insurgents retired into the city. The litter, bristling all round with arrows like a hedgehog, was taken down, and, by desire of Aly, placed in a retired spot, where Ayesha's brother, Mohammed, pitched a tent for her. As he drew aside the curtain of the litter, she screamed at the unknown intrusion;—'Are thine own people, then,' he said, 'become strange unto thee?' 'It is my brother!' she exclaimed, and suffered herself to be led into the tent. The brave but wayward lady had escaped without a wound.

The insurgents defeated. Ayesha escapes unhurt.

The carnage in this ill-starred battle was very great. The field was covered with ten thousand bodies in equal proportion from either side;[2] and this, notwithstanding that there was no pursuit. For Aly had given stringent orders that no fugitive should be followed, nor any wounded soldier slain, nor plunder seized, nor the privacy of any house invaded. A great trench was dug, and in it the dead were buried, friends and foes together. Aly, who encamped for three days without the city, himself performed the funeral service. It was a new experience to bury the dead slain in battle not against the infidel, but believer fighting against believer. Instead of cursing the memory of his enemies (as became too soon the fashion in these civil wars), Aly on this occasion spoke hopefully of the future state of those who had entered the field, on whichever side, with an honest heart. When they brought him the sword of Zobeir, he cursed the man who had taken his life; and, calling to

Losses in the battle.

[1] This camel is a prominent subject in tradition, as we might expect from its having given its name to the battle, and many tales of heroism are told both in its attacks and defence. One says he never heard anything so fearful as the scream it gave when hamstrung.

[2] The numbers may be exaggerated; but the loss of life was, no doubt, immense, and it is evidence of the terrible fury with which the battle was fought. Of one tribe, the Beni Dhabba, alone, 1,000 men are said to have been slain. The strong partisan feelings both of Bedouin against Coreish, and of the opposing families of Hâshim and Omeyya, long pent up, tended to give bitterness to the conflict; and there was in addition the new cry of vengeance for the blood of Othmân.

mind the feats of the deceased warrior in the early battles of Islam, he exclaimed: 'Many a time hath this sword driven away care and sorrow from the Prophet's brow.' The Moslems might well mourn over the memory both of Talha and Zobeir, when they remembered how on the field of Ohod the former had saved the life of Mahomet at the peril of his own; and how often the latter, conspicuous from afar in his saffron turban, carried confusion into the ranks of the idolaters while they yet held possession of Mecca. Their fall, and that of many amongst the Companions, was a loss to the empire itself, because seriously weakening the Còreish in the struggle that yet remained to be fought out betwixt them and the Arab tribes. In fact, this victory of Aly was virtually the victory of these latter—that is to say, of the regicides, and of the factious citizens of Kûfa. Thenceforward Aly himself was almost wholly dependent on them. If, instead, he had succeeded in effecting a strong and lasting compromise with Talha and Zobeir, his position would have been incomparably strengthened.

Aly's magnanimity towards the enemy.

The bearing of Aly after the victory was generous towards the fallen foe. Having entered the city, he divided the contents of the treasury amongst the troops which had fought on his side, promising them a still larger reward when the Lord should have delivered Syria into his hands. But otherwise he treated friends and foes alike, and buried in oblivion the animosities of the past. Merwân and the immediate adherents of the house of Omeyya fled back into the Hejâz, or found refuge in Syria. All that remained in the city swore fealty to Aly. The only class dissatisfied was that of the slaves and rabble, who murmured at having no share in the treasure, nor any chance of plunder. These, gathering into marauding bands, occasioned much disquietude to the Caliph, and indeed hastened his departure with the view of checking the mischief they were bent on.[1]

[1] So carefully were Aly's orders against plundering observed, that what-

Ayesha was treated by Aly with the honour and reverence due to 'the Spouse of the Prophet both in this life and in the life to come.' She was now five-and-forty years of age, but had lost little of the fire and vivacity of her early days. After the battle, the Caliph visited her tent, and expressed his satisfaction at finding her unhurt; adding mildly, but half reproachfully: 'The Lord pardon thee for what hath passed, and have mercy upon thee.' 'And upon thee!' was her ready answer. The best house in Bussorah was given up to her; and there she was waited on by her own adherents. Not many days after, she was dismissed, with a retinue of forty handmaids, and attended by her brother. Aly himself accompanied her for a mile or two on foot; and a large party went as far as the first stage, to bid her farewell. At Mecca she performed the Lesser Pilgrimage; and then retiring to Medîna, no more attempted to interfere with the affairs of State. Her nephew Abdallah son of Zobeir (and of her sister Asma [1]) retired with her. He is famous as the nearly successful usurper of the Caliphate; but that was not till Ayesha had passed away. She spent the remainder of her days at Medîna. There crowds of pilgrims visiting the Prophet's tomb (her own apartment) gazed wonderingly at her as the once beautiful and favourite wife of Mahomet; while she, becoming the garrulous and fertile source of tradition, entertained them with stories of the Prophet, ascending as far back as the earliest memories of her childhood. She died in the fifty-eighth year of the Hegira, aged about sixty-six, having passed forty-seven years in widowhood.[2]

Ayesha retires to Medîna.

ever was found on the field, or in the insurgent camp, was gathered together in the Great Mosque, and every man was allowed to claim his own. To the malcontents who complained that they were not allowed to take booty, Aly replied that the rights of war, in this case, lasted only so long as the ranks were arrayed against each other; and that, immediately on submission, the insurgents resumed their rights and privileges as brother Moslems.

[1] 'She of the two shreds.'—*Life of Mahomet*, p. 145.

[2] There is a great abundance of tradition concerning Ayesha, both in the battle and after it. In the heat of the action, Aly's soldiers taunted her as 'the *unnatural* Mother of the Faithful.' The soldiers on her side, in

Ibn Abbâs governor of Bussorah.

Aly did not stay long in Bussorah. Having appointed his cousin, Abdallah son of Abbâs, as governor of the city, with Ziâd, the able administrator, to aid him, as in charge of the treasury, he set out for Kûfa.

reply, extemporised a couplet, extolling her as 'the noblest and best of Mothers.' When they told it to her, she was much affected, and exclaimed, 'Would that I had died twenty years before this!' Aly also, when he heard it, said, 'Would that I too had died twenty years ago!'

Ayesha, always ready in repartee, was not very particular in her language, and some of the speeches attributed to her are both coarse and intemperate. Asim approaching her litter on the field, she cursed him for the liberty he had taken. 'It was but a little something red and white,' he said, impudently, 'that I caught a glimpse of.' 'The Lord uncover thy nakedness,' she cried angrily; 'cut off thy hands, and make thy wife a widow!' All which, they say, came to pass. A saucy passage is related between her and the aged Ammâr, whose last words were, as she was leaving, 'Praise be to the Lord that we shall hear no more that vile tongue of thine!'

Aly's conduct was forbearing and generous. Of the family with which Ayesha was lodged at Bussorah, two sons had been killed fighting, one on the side of Aly, the other against him. The widow of the latter was loud in her lamentation, crying out against Aly as the cause of her sorrow. Aly was asked to punish her; but he refused, saying she was but a weak woman, and should not be touched. On the other hand, some one who spoke contumeliously of Ayesha was, by his order, beaten with shoes.

As Ayesha was starting for Mecca, Aly and a company gathered round her. When the time came to bid farewell, she said, 'Let us not entertain hard thoughts one against the other; for verily, as regardeth Aly and myself, there happened not anything between us (alluding to her misadventure in the Prophet's lifetime*) but that which is wont to happen between a wife and her husband's family; and verily Aly was one of the best of them that entertained suspicions against me.' Aly replied: 'She speaketh the truth; there was nought, beyond what she saith, between her and me.' And then he went on to say (quoting Mahomet's own words) that 'she was not only the Prophet's wife in this world, but equally his spouse in the next.'

* *Life of Mahomet*, p. 311.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ALY TRANSFERS HIS SEAT OF GOVERNMENT TO KUFA. AFFAIRS IN EGYPT.

A.H. XXXVI. A.D. 656, 657.

Medîna abandoned as seat of Caliphate.

WHEN Aly rode forth from Medîna in pursuit of the insurgent army, a Companion seized his bridle;—'Stay!' he cried with earnest voice;—'if thou goest forth from this city, the government will depart therefrom, never more to return.' He was pushed aside as a crackbrained meddler. But his words were long remembered, and the prophecy was true. Medîna, hitherto queen of the Moslem world, was to be the seat of empire no more.

Aly's entry into Kûfa. Rajab, A.H. XXXVI. Jan. A.D. 657.

About the middle of the thirty-sixth year of the Hegira, seven months after the death of Othmân, Aly entered Kûfa. The first four months of his Caliphate had been spent, as we have seen, at Medîna; the other three in the camp at Rabadza, in the campaign ending with the battle of the Camel, and a short stay at Bussorah. No Caliph had as yet visited Kûfa. It was now to be the seat of Aly's government. We find no mention of the manner of his entry and reception; simply the fact of his arrival. No doubt the people were flattered by the honour now put upon them. The city also had some advantages; for there were in it many leading men, able, and some of them willing, to support the Caliph by their influence. Moreover, Aly might calculate on the jealousy of the inhabitants towards Syria, in the approaching struggle with Muâvia. But all this was more than counterbalanced by the fickle and factious humour of the populace. It was the focus of

Factious spirit there.

Bedouin democracy; and the spirit of the Bedouins was yet untamed. What had they gained, the citizens asked one of another, by the rebellion against Othmân? The cry of vengeance on the regicides was for the moment stifled; but things were fast drifting back again into the old Coreishite groove. This was, in fact, the same cry as the Arab tribes were making all around. 'Aly hath set up his cousins, the sons of Abbâs, everywhere—in Medîna, in Mecca, and in Yemen; and now here again at Bussorah; while he himself will rule at Kûfa. Of what avail that we made away with Othmân; and that we have shed all this blood, fighting with Zobeir and Talha?' So spoke the arch-conspirator Ashtar among his friends at Bussorah; and Aly, fearful of the effect of such teaching, took him in his train to Kûfa, where, indeed, among the excitable populace his influence was even more dangerous. Another uneasy symptom of the times was that the baser sort and the servile dregs of Bussorah, breaking loose from authority, went forth in a body, and took possession of Sejestan on the Persian frontier. They killed the leader sent by Aly to suppress the insurrection, and were not put down till Ibn Abbâs himself attacked them with a force from Bussorah.

Struggle in prospect with Syria.

It was in the West, however, that the sky loured the most. That was but a shorn and truncated Caliphate which Aly enjoyed, so long as his authority was scorned in Syria. A mortal combat with Muâvia loomed in that direction. But, before resuming the thread of the Syrian story, it is necessary first to turn to Egypt and relate what was being enacted there.

Mohammed ibn Abu Hodzeifa usurps Egypt. Shawwâl, A.H. XXXV. April, A.D. 656.

When the band of conspirators set out from Egypt to attack Othmân, we have seen that Mohammed son of Abu Hodzeifa thereupon ousted Abu Sarh, Othmân's lieutenant, and usurped the government. This man's father had been killed at Yemâma, and Othmân, adopting the orphan, had brought him up kindly. Mortified at the refusal of the Caliph to give him a command until he should have proved his capacity

in the field, Mohammed joined the insurgent faction, and gained great influence in Egypt by an affected piety and by the vehement denunciation of his former guardian. On the murder of Othmân he succeeded in holding the government of Egypt for several months. But he quickly paid the penalty of his ingratitude. On the approach of the new governor, sent by Aly, he fled to Syria, and there lost his life.[1]

Flies to Syria and is killed.

The follower whom Aly selected for the heavy task of governing Egypt was Cays, a citizen of Medîna, son of that Sád ibn Obâda who, it may be remembered, was the rival of Abu Bekr for the Caliphate. Of approved sagacity, strength, and judgment, he was a loyal follower of Aly. He declined to take an army with him, saying that the Caliph had more need of soldiers than he; and preferred instead to be supported by seven 'Companions' of the Prophet, whom he took along with him. He was well received by the Egyptians at large, who swore allegiance to him in behalf of Aly. But a strong faction, as before observed, found shelter in the district of Kharanba, and loudly demanded satisfaction for the death of Othmân. Cays wisely left these alone for the present, waiving even the demand for tithe. In other respects he held Egypt firmly in his grasp.

Cays appointed governor of Egypt. Safar, A.H. XXXVI. August, A.D. 656.

With the prospect of an early attack from the banks of the Euphrates, Muâvia became uneasy at the Egyptian border being commanded by so firm and powerful a ruler as Cays; whom, therefore, he made every effort to detach from his allegiance to Aly. Upbraiding him with having joined a

Is supplanted by Muâvia's machinations.

[1] A separate chapter is generally assigned by the Arabian historians to this episode; but its interest lies almost wholly in the intense hatred conceived by the usurper towards Othmân. Hearing of his factious courses, Othmân, to soften and remind him of his past care and favour, sent him from Medîna a purse, and also a camel laden with rich garments, as a present. The ungrateful rebel hung these up in the Great Mosque of Fostât, and used them to point his invectives against Othmân and the corruption of the age. Having joined the insurgent faction, he, no doubt, hoped that Othmân's successor would have confirmed him in the government of Egypt. But Aly, treating him as he deserved, showed him no favour, and appointed a man of his own to the government.

party whose hands were still red with the blood of Othmân, he reminded Cays that there was yet time to repent, and promised that, if even now he joined in avenging the crime, he should not only be confirmed in the government of Egypt, but his kinsmen would be promoted to such office in the Hejâz, or elsewhere, as he might desire. Cays, unwilling to precipitate hostilities, fenced his answer with well-balanced words. Of Aly's complicity in the foul deed he had no knowledge; he would wait. Meanwhile it was not in his mind to make any attack on Syria. Again pressed by Muâvia, Cays frankly declared that he was, and would remain, a staunch supporter of the Caliph's cause. Thereupon Muâvia sought craftily to stir up jealousy between the Viceroy and his Master. He gave out that Cays was temporising, and spoke of his treatment of the Kharanba malcontents as proving that he was one at heart with them.[1] The report, assiduously spread, reached (as it was intended) the court of Aly, where it was taken up by those who either doubted the fidelity of Cays or envied his prosperity. To test his obedience, Aly ordered an advance against the schismatics of Kharanba; and when Cays remonstrated against the policy, it was taken as proof of his complicity. He was deposed, and Mohammed the regicide, son of Abu Bekr, appointed in his room. Cays retired in anger to Medîna, where, as on neutral ground, adherents of either side were unmolested. Finding no peace there from the taunts of Merwân and his party, Cays resolved at last to go to Kûfa, and cast himself on Aly's clemency; and Aly, on the calumnies being cleared away, took

Mohammed son of Abu Bekr appointed to Egypt.

[1] I give the narrative as related by concurrent tradition, which I can only question when there is strong internal probability against it. It would, no doubt, have been satisfactory to have had some evidence of Muâvia's deceptive course of action. It may, however, all be true, for Muâvia was never overscrupulous. But we have no proof excepting *fama clamans*; and court influence under the Abbaseides disposed the historians of the day to make the most of every report that was damaging to the character of the Omeyyad dynasty. The reader must, therefore, be cautious of accepting implicitly all these imputations of underhand machination.

him back at once into his confidence, and thenceforward kept him at court as his chief adviser. Muâvia was grieved that Merwân had driven Cays away from Medîna: 'If thou hadst aided Aly,' he wrote upbraidingly, 'with a hundred thousand men, it had been a lesser evil than is the gain to Aly of such a counsellor.'[1]

Muâvia is joined by Amru.

On his own side, however, Muâvia had gained a powerful and astute adviser in the person of the conqueror of Egypt. During the attack on Othmân, Amru had retired from Medîna with his two sons to Palestine. The tidings of the tragedy, aggravated by his own unkindly treatment of the Caliph, affected him so keenly that he wept like a woman. 'It is I,' he said, 'who, by deserting the aged man, am responsible for his death.' From his place of retirement he watched the struggle of Zobeir and Talha at Bussorah; and when Aly conquered, he repaired at once to Damascus, and with his two sons presented himself before Muâvia. In consequence of the unfriendly attitude he had held towards Othmân, Amru was at first received coldly. But in the end, the past was all condoned; friendship was restored between the two chiefs, and thenceforward Amru was the trusted counsellor of Muâvia.[2]

Weakness of Aly's position at Kûfa.

This coalition, and the false step of Aly in recalling Cays from Egypt, now materially strengthened Muâvia's hands. The success of Aly at Bussorah brought at least this advantage even to Muâvia, that it removed Talha and Zobeir, the only other competitors, from the field. On the other hand,

[1] Aly's cousins (sons of Jáfar, the Prophet's uncle) appear to have encouraged the suspicions against Cays, hoping thus to pave the way for the appointment of Mohammed son of Abu Bekr, who was their uterine brother (Abu Bekr married Jafar's widow, *Life of Mahomet*, p. 410).

[2] One of his sons is said to have advised Amru to remain in retirement and leave the impending conflict to be settled by those immediately concerned. The other urged that it was not becoming one of his father's rank and dignity to be neutral. The former, Amru admitted (so runs the Abbasside tradition), advised him the best for his spiritual advantage; the latter for his temporal, and he followed it.

the position of Aly, as one of concession to the Arab faction, was fraught with peril. While refusing ostensibly to identify himself with the murderers of Othmân, it was virtually in their cause that he had taken up arms; and therefore equally in the cause of the Arabs, as against the Coreish and aristocracy of Islam. And Aly should have foreseen that the socialistic element in this unnatural compromise must sooner or later come into collision with the Caliphate.

Advantages of Muâvia's position in Syria.

The authority of Muâvia rested on a firmer basis; his attitude was bolder, and his position more consistent. He had from the first resisted the levelling demands of the faction which rose up against Othmân. He was, therefore, justified now in a course of action which, pursuing these to justice, asserted in the pursuit the supremacy of the Coreish. The influence of the 'Companions' had always been paramount in Syria; and the Arab element (partly because very largely recruited from the aristocratic tribes of the south) was thoroughly under control. The cry for vengeance, inflamed by the gory emblems still hanging from the cathedral pulpit, was taken up by high and low. The temporising attitude of the Caliph was in every man's mouth as a proof of complicity with the regicides. And though many may have dreaded Aly's vengeance in the event of his ultimate success, the general feeling throughout Syria was a burning desire to avenge the murder of his ill-fated predecessor.

Aly and Muâvia in personal antagonism.

Still, whatever other motives may have been at work elsewhere, the contest, as between Aly and Muâvia, had now become a purely personal one. The struggle was for the crown; and many looked to 'the grey mule of Syria' as having the better chance. A possible solution of the contest lay, no doubt, in the erection of Syria into an independent kingdom side by side with that of Persia and

Egypt. But the disintegration of the empire of Islam was an idea which as yet had hardly entered into the minds of the Faithful. The unity of the Caliphate, as established by the history and the precedents of a quarter of a century, was still, and long continued, the ruling sentiment of Islam.

Unity of Caliphate still the ruling sentiment

CHAPTER XXXIX.

BATTLE OF SIFFIN.

A.H. XXXVI., XXXVII. A.D. 657.

Aly's envoy returns with defiant message from Muâvia. Shabân, A.H. XXXVI. January, A.D. 657.

AFTER Aly had established himself at Kûfa, there followed a short interval of rest. The lieutenants and commanders, from their various provinces, flocked into the new capital to do homage to the Caliph. Towards one of these, named Jarîr, chief of the Beni Bajîla, Muâvia was known to entertain friendly sentiments. Him, therefore, Aly deputed to Damascus with a letter, wherein, after reciting the fact of his election at Medîna to the Caliphate, and the discomfiture of his enemies at Bussorah, he called on Muâvia to follow the example of the empire, and, with the rest, to take also the oath of allegiance. Like the former envoy, Jarîr was kept long in attendance. At last he was dismissed with an oral message, that allegiance would be tendered if punishment were meted out to the regicides, but on no other possible condition. The envoy further reported to Aly, that Othmân's blood-stained garment still hung upon the pulpit of the Great Mosque, and that a multitude of the Syrian warriors had sworn that they would use no water to wash themselves withal, neither sleep in their beds, till they had slain the murderers of the aged Caliph, and those that sheltered them.[1] Ashtar accused Jarîr of playing into the hands of Muâvia; and by having dallied for so long a time at his court, of thus giving the Syrians leisure to mature their plans and become hardened

[1] The oath reminds one of a similar vow taken by Hind after the battle of Bedr. (*Life of Mahomet*, p. 246.)

in their hostile attitude. Jarîr, disgusted at the imputation, retired a neutral to Kirckesia, or, according to others, went over to Muâvia.

Aly invades Northern Syria. Dzul Cáda, A.H. XXXVI. April, A.D. 657.

Seeing that Muâvia was hopelessly alienated, Aly resolved no longer to delay the attack upon Syria, and he proclaimed an expedition accordingly. At first the people were slack in answering the call. But after a time, the Caliph succeeded in gathering together from Bussorah, Medâin, and Kûfa, an imposing force of 50,000 men. His plan was to march first by Upper Mesopotamia, and so to invade Syria from the north. A detachment was sent as an advance-guard up the western bank of the Euphrates, but meeting with active opposition there, it was forced to cross back again into Mesopotamia. Aly himself, with the main body, marched across the plain of Dura to Medâin, and thence up the Tigris. Then turning, short of Mosul, towards the west, he crossed the great desert of Mesopotamia, and, outstripping his advanced column, reached the Euphrates in its upper course at Ricca.[1] An unfriendly population lined the banks of the river; and it was not without sanguinary threats that Ashtar forced them to construct a bridge. The army crossed near Ricca; and then marching some little distance along the right bank, westward, in the direction of Aleppo, they met the Syrian outposts at Sûr.[2]

On learning Aly's preparations, Muâvia lost no time in

[1] The western detachment, 12,000 strong, was forced by the hostile attitude of Syria hastily to retrace its steps as far as Hit, where they recrossed the river, and then marched north through Mesopotamia. They were so long delayed that Aly, with the main body, reached Ricca first, and, on seeing them come up, naïvely exclaimed, 'Lo, here is my advanced column in the rear!'

The main body took the Tigris route, perhaps as affording better forage at that dry season of the year.

[2] When the people refused to throw a bridge of boats over the river at Ricca, a detachment moved farther up, intending to cross by the standing bridge at Membaj; but meanwhile Ashtar threatened to put the inhabitants to the sword, and so had a bridge constructed at Ricca. Ricca (Nicephorium) is at the junction of the Belîk with the Euphrates, at which point the Great River, in its upper course, trends westward, and thus approaches Aleppo. *Sûr al Rûm* (now in ruins) is a little way west of Ricca. It is near Thapsacus of the ancients, on the line of the march of Cyrus.

Muâvia, advancing, meets Aly on field of Siffîn.

marshalling his forces, which greatly outnumbered the enemy, and, having no desert to cross, were soon to the front. Amru was in command, having his two sons, and his freedman Werdân, as lieutenants.[1] Aly, desirous of averting bloodshed, had given orders that, as soon as his troops came upon the enemy, they should halt, and, confining themselves to the defensive, avoid precipitating hostilities before opportunity had been given for friendly overture. The vanguards of the two armies spent the first few days in skirmishing. Ashtar challenged the Syrian officer to single combat; but the challenge was declined, and Ashtar told that, having imbrued his hands in the blood of the late Caliph, he could not claim the privileges of honourable warfare. When the main armies came in sight of each other, Aly found Muâvia so encamped as to cut him off from the river, and reduce his army to straits for water. He therefore brought on an engagement, in which Muâvia was forced to change his ground, and occupy the ill-starred field of Siffîn.[2] Some days of inaction followed; after which Aly sent three of his chief men to demand that, for the good of the commonwealth, Muâvia should tender his allegiance. No mention is made of any offer (though perhaps it may be presumed) on the part of Aly to confirm Muâvia, in case of his submission, in the government of Syria. A scene ensued of fruitless re-

[1] Freedmen begin to play prominent parts. Aly, on his side, gave a banner to Kinbar, his freedman, and put him in command of a column; and a verse of Amru's has been preserved in which he pits the one freedman against the other.

[2] The tendency of tradition, which continues to be cast, as a rule, in an Abbasside mould, is, throughout, to speak disparagingly of Muâvia, and eulogistically of Aly. Thus Aly is represented as sending Sassâa to ask Muâvia's leave for his army to get water from the river until they had had the opportunity of settling their differences. Amru was for yielding to the request; but Muâvia, counselled by Welîd and Abu Sarh, declined. A skirmish ensued, and the Syrians were beaten from their ground. Then Aly's people wished to refuse water to the Syrians; but Aly was more generous, and allowed them to take what water they wanted.

Siffîn was to the west of Ricca, about half-way to Balîs (one of Chesney's steamer stations), opposite the fort of Jabor or Dausa, and about 100 miles from the coast. It lay south-east of Aleppo, and north-east of Hims.

crimination. On the one hand, Muâvia demanded that the murderers of Othmân should be brought to justice; on the other, the demand was stigmatised as a mere cat's-paw covering ambitious designs upon the Caliphate. This was resented as a base calumny by Muâvia. 'Begone, ye lying scoundrels!' he cried; 'the sword shall decide between us;' and, so saying, he drove them from his presence. Finding all attempts at compromise to be useless, Aly marshalled his army into seven or eight separate columns, each under a Bedouin chieftain of note. As many separate columns were similarly formed on the Syrian side. And every day one of these columns, taking the field in turn, was drawn up against a corresponding column of the other army. Desultory fighting in this singular way was kept up throughout the month, there being sometimes as many as two engagements in a single day. But the contest could not up to this time have been very earnest or severe, since little mention is made of sanguinary results.[1] On both sides they feared, we are told, to bring the whole forces out into a common battle, 'lest the Moslems should be destroyed, root and branch,' in the internecine struggle.

Desultory fighting, Dzul Hijj, A.H. XXXVI. May, A.D. 657.

A new year, the 37th of the Hegira, opened on the combatants, wearied by this endless and indecisive strife, and inclined to thoughts of peace. A truce was called, to last throughout Moharram, the first month of the year. The interval was spent in deputations; but these proved as fruitless as those which had gone before. Aly, influenced by the anti-Omeyyad faction around him, was not disposed

Truce during final month of A.H. XXXVII. June, A.D. 657.

[1] In the Persian version of Tabari, numbers are said to have been slain every day; but no details nor any names are given, so the casualties could not have been very serious. Blood was not yet inflamed.

It is significant that Aly's deputations to Muâvia, as well as the commanders of his columns (whose names are given), were almost exclusively Bedouin chiefs; that is to say, there were hardly any of the Coreish or of the citizens of Medîna amongst them, excepting Cays, the ex-Governor of Egypt. Muâvia, on the contrary, had many such around him, as Obeidallah son of Omar, Abdallah son of Khâlid, Habîb ibn Maslama, &c.

even now to admit the injustice of Othmân's having been put to death. When pressed upon the point by the Syrian envoys, he declined to commit himself. 'I will not say,' was his evasive answer, 'that he was wrongfully attacked, nor will I say that the attack was justified.' 'Then,' answered the Syrians, 'we shall fight against thee, and fight likewise against everyone else who refuseth to say that thy predecessor was not wrongfully put to death;' and with these words they took their final leave. On his side, Muâvia declared to the messengers of Aly that nothing short of the punishment of the regicides would induce him to quit the field. 'What?' exclaimed some one; 'wouldest thou put Ammâr to death?' 'And why not?' answered Muâvia; 'wherefore should the son of the bondwoman not suffer for having slain the freedman of Othmân?'[1] 'Impossible,' they cried; 'where will ye stop? It were easier to bale out the floods of the Euphrates.'

Fruitless negotiations.

Renewal of hostilities, Safar, A.H. XXXVII. July, A.D. 657.

So passed away the first month of the year. At the beginning of the second, Aly, seeing things unchanged, commenced hostilities afresh. He caused proclamation to be made along Muâvia's front, recalling the Syrians from rebellion to their proper allegiance. But it only made them rally with the more enthusiasm around Muâvia; and a great company took an oath, girding themselves in token with their turbans, that they would defend him to the death. The warfare was, however, carried on at the first in the same indecisive style as before. Six leaders on Aly's side took, in daily turn, the command against as many captains on the other side.[2] But though still desultory, the conflict was

[1] Ammâr, the ex-Governor of Kûfa, was son of the bondwoman Sommeya. (See above, p. 268.) Othmân's freedman was slain in the first onslaught of the conspirators. (*Ibid.* p. 340.) Ammâr's life was forfeit, they meant to say, for the lesser crime, but much more for the assassination of the Caliph.

[2] Thus the first day Ashtar was in command against Habîb ibn Maslama; then Hâshim ibn Otba (the hero of Câdesîya) against Abul Aûr; on the third day Ammâr against one of Amru's sons, and so on. After six days the turn came round again to Ashtar and Habîb. But it all reads somewhat too made up.

becoming severer and more embittered. Many single combats were fought. One of Aly's sons went forth on the challenge of a son of Omar, but was recalled by his father.[1] And so eight or nine days passed, one differing little from the other, till the beginning of the second week, when Aly made up his mind to bring on a general, and, as he hoped, decisive battle. The night was spent by his followers in preparation, and (as the Abbasside historians relate) in recitation from the Scripture, and in prayer. Thus, ten days after the renewal of hostilities, both armies were drawn out in their entire array. They fought the whole day, but the shades of evening fell, and none had got the better. The following morning, the combat was renewed, and with greater vigour. Aly posted himself in the centre with the flower of his troops from Medîna; the wings were composed separately, one of the warriors from Bussorah, the other of those from Kûfa. Muâvia had a pavilion pitched upon the field; and there, surrounded by five compacted lines of his sworn body-guard, watched the day. Amru, with a great weight of horse, bore down upon the Kûfa wing. Before the shock it gave way; and Aly, with his sons, was exposed to imminent peril, as well from the thick shower of arrows, as from a close encounter. Reproaching the men of Kûfa for their cowardice, the Caliph fought sword in hand, and with his ancient bravery withstood the charge. Ashtar, at the head of three hundred *Readers*[2]—the

Battle of Siffîn. 11 and 12 Safar; July 29 and 30.

[1] Mohammed son of Aly was challenged by Obeidallah son of Omar. When Aly saw this, he put spurs to his horse and would have taken his son's place, whereupon the latter returned to the ranks, saying, 'Why didst thou not leave me alone, and I should have slain my man? And how couldst thou, my father, offer single combat to such a scoundrel, and the son of one (Omar) who was so inferior to thee?' 'Hush!' said Aly, 'speak nought of his father but good.' Many instances are given of brothers and near relatives meeting each other in conflicting ranks, and turning aside from the fight in consequence; —so much was society, even to the domestic circle, rent by the civil war.

[2] *Readers* or *Reciters* of the Corân (corâa), those, namely, who, having it by heart, were able to repeat it from beginning to end. They were the most

'Ghâzies' of the day—led forward the other wing, which fell with fury upon Muâvia's 'turbaned' body-guard. Four of its five ranks were already cut to pieces, when Muâvia, alarmed, bethought himself of flight, and had even called for his horse, when certain martial lines came to his lips, and he held his ground. Amru stood by him, 'Courage to-day,' he cried; 'to-morrow victory.' The fifth rank repelled the danger, and both sides again fought on equal terms. Feats of desperate bravery were displayed by both armies. Many men of rank were slain. On Aly's side fell Hâshim, the hero of Câdesîya. Of even greater moment was the death of Ammâr, now over ninety years, and one of the leading regicides. As he saw Hâshim fall, he exclaimed to his fellows: 'O Paradise! how close thou couchest beneath the arrow's point and the falchion's flash! O Hâshim! even now I see heaven opened, and black-eyed maidens, all bridally attired, clasping thee in their fond embrace!'[1] So, singing, and refreshing himself with his favourite draught of milk and water, the aged warrior, fired again with the ardour of youth, rushed into the enemy's ranks, and met the envied fate. It had long been in everyone's mouth both in town and camp, that Mahomet had once said to him: 'By a godless and rebellious race, O Ammâr, thou shalt one day be slain;' in other words (so the saying was interpreted), Ammâr would be killed fighting on the side of right. Thus his death, as it were, condemned the cause of the ranks against whom he fought; and so it spread dismay in Muâvia's host. When Amru heard of it, he answered readily: 'And who

fanatical part of the Moslem forces, answering to the Ghâzies of our own day.

[1] Other versions are given of Ammâr's last words by the Secretary of Wâckidy, as this: 'The thirsty man longeth for water; and here, close by, it welleth up. Descend to the spring (death) and drink. This is the joyful day of meeting with friends, with Mahomet and his Companions.' The various versions all portend the same wild fanatical spirit which influenced the Moslem armies in the first battles against the infidels, and which was now being imported equally into the civil war against their own brethren in the faith.

is it that hath killed Ammâr, but Aly the "rebellious," that brought him hither?' The clever repartee ran through the Syrian host, and did much at once to efface the evil omen.[1]

Battle still rages on morning of third day, 13 Safar, July 31.

The fighting this day was in real earnest, and the carnage on both sides great. Darkness failed to separate the combatants; and, like Câdesîya, that night was called a second 'Night of Clangour.' The morning broke on the two armies still in conflict. With emptied quivers they now fought hand to hand. Ashtar, the regicide, resolved on victory at whatever cost, continued to push the attack with unflinching bravery and persistence. Muâvia, disheartened, began to speak to Amru of proposing to Aly a judicial combat, Goliath-like, with a champion on either side. 'Then go forth thyself, and challenge Aly,' said Amru. 'Not so,' answered Muâvia; 'I will not do that, for Aly ever slayeth his man,

[1] This curious saying, attributed to the Prophet (the same which alarmed Zobeir at the Battle of the Camel, see p. 363), is thus explained. When Mahomet first arrived in Medîna and began to build the Great Mosque there, his followers all put their shoulders to the work, and began to carry loads of stone, &c. upon their heads. Ammâr was laden with a double burden, and Mahomet, seeing him fatigued, began to blow off the dust from his head, saying kindly to him, 'Ammâr! a cruel and unjust people will surely slay thee;' meaning apparently that 'the people will surely cause thy death by making thee carry such loads.' Others attribute the saying to the similar occasion when Medîna was besieged, and the citizens dug the great *Ditch*, carrying away the loads of earth. Whatever the occasion, the saying was treasured up, and when the civil war broke out, was accepted, and ever after quoted by their enemies, as conclusive evidence that the Omeyyads were 'the rebellious people' foretold by Mahomet.

The idea had taken such hold of the Syrian army that Amru said he was thankful that Dzul Kelâa (the great Himyarite hero who fell fighting on Muâvia's side) was slain before Ammâr's death, as otherwise it might have staggered his constancy to the Syrian cause.

The saying itself, and the occasion on which Mahomet gave utterance to it, assume such importance from their bearing on the great dynastic controversy, that the Secretary of Wâckidy devotes several pages to the multitudinous traditions on the subject. The Alyites hold point-blank that 'the truth *must* have been with Ammâr, and that it accompanied him on whichever side he fought.' (*Kâtib Wâckidi*, fol. 228–230.)

Mahomet is said, also, to have foretold to Ammâr that his last drink would be milk mingled with water; rather a safe prophecy, seeing that it was Ammâr's favourite beverage.

and then *thou* shouldest succeed me.' Amru, indeed, well knew that this was not in Muâvia's line; and it was no time for continuing grim pleasantry like this. All at once Amru bethought him of a stratagem. 'Raise aloft the sacred leaves of the Corân,' he cried; 'if any refuse to abide thereby, it will sow discord amongst them; if they accept, it will be a reprieve from cruel slaughter.' Muâvia caught at the words. And so forthwith they fixed the sacred scrolls on the points of their lances, and raising them aloft, called out along the line of battle: 'The law of the Lord! The law of the Lord! Let it decide between us!' No sooner heard, than the men of Kûfa leaped forward, re-echoing the cry: 'The law of the Lord, that shall decide between us!' As all were shouting thus with one accord, Aly stepped forth and expostulated with them: 'It was the device,' he cried, 'of evil men; afraid of defeat, they sought their end by guile, and cloaked rebellion under love of the Word.' It was all in vain. To every argument they answered (and the 'Readers' loudest of all): 'We are called to the Book, and we cannot decline it.' At last, in open mutiny, they threatened the unfortunate Caliph, that, unless he agreed, they would all desert him, drive him over to the enemy, or serve him as they had served Othmân. Seeing that further opposition would be futile, Aly said: 'Stay wild and treasonable words. Obey and fight. But if ye will rebel, do as ye list.' 'We will not fight,' they cried; 'recall Ashtar from the field.' Ashtar, thus summoned, at the first refused. 'We are gaining a great victory,' he said, 'I will not come;' and he turned to fight again. But the tumult increased, and Aly sent a second time to say: 'Of what avail is victory when treason rageth? Wouldst thou have the Caliph murdered, or delivered over to the enemy?' Ashtar, on hearing this, unwillingly returned, and a fierce altercation ensued between him and the angry soldiery. 'Ye were fighting,' he said, 'but yesterday for the Lord, and the choicest among you lost their lives. What is it

Hostilities suspended for arbitration by Corân.

but that ye now acknowledge yourselves in the wrong, and the Martyrs gone to hell?' 'Nay,' they answered; 'it is not so. Yesterday we fought for the Lord; to-day, also for the Lord, we stay the fight.' On this, Ashtar upbraided them as 'traitors, cowards, hypocrites, and villains.' In return, they reviled him, and struck his charger with their whips. Aly interposed. The tumult was stayed. And Asháth, chief of the Beni Kinda, was sent to ask Muâvia 'what his precise meaning in raising the Corân aloft might be.' 'It is this,' he sent answer back, 'that we should return, both you and we, to the will of the Lord, as set forth in the Book. Each side shall name an Umpire, and the verdict shall be binding.' Aly's army shouted assent. The unfortunate Caliph was forced to the still deeper humiliation of appointing as his arbiter a person who had deserted him. The soldiery cried out for Abu Mûsa, the temporising Governor of Kûfa who had been deposed for want of active loyalty. 'This man,' answered Aly, 'did but lately leave us and flee; and not till after several months I pardoned him. Neither hath he now been fighting with us. Here is a worthy representative, the son of Abbâs, the Prophet's uncle; choose him as your Umpire.' 'As well name thyself,' they answered rudely. 'Then take Ashtar.' 'What!' said the Bedouin chiefs in the same rough imperious strain, 'the man that hath set the world on fire! None for us but Abu Mûsa.' It was a bitter choice for Aly, but he had no alternative. The Syrian arbiter was Amru, for whose deep and crafty ways Abu Mûsa was no match.[1] He

[1] Abu Mûsa had kept aloof from the battle, but must have been in the neighbourhood. When told of the arbitration, he exclaimed, 'The Lord be praised, Who hath stayed the fighting!' 'But thou art appointed Arbiter on our side.' 'Alas! alas!' he cried; and so, in much trepidation, he repaired to Aly's camp. Ahnaf ibn Cays asked to be appointed joint-Umpire with Abu Mûsa, who, he said, was not the man to stand alone, nor had he tact and wit enough for the task;—'There is not a knot which Abu Mûsa can tie, but I will unloose the same; nor a knot he can unloose, but I will find another still harder to unravel.' This was too true; but the army was in an insolent and perverse mood, and would have none but Abu Mûsa.

Deed of arbitration, 13 Safar, A.H. XXXVII. July 31, A.D. 665.

presented himself in the Caliph's camp, and the agreement was put in writing. As dictated from Aly's side, it ran thus: '*In the name of the Lord Most Merciful!* This is what hath been agreed upon between the Commander of the Faithful, and ——' 'Stay!' cried Amru (like the Coreish to the Prophet at Hodeibia); 'Aly is your Commander, but he is not ours.' Again the helpless Caliph had to give way, and the names were written down of the contracting parties as simply 'Aly and Muâvia.'[1] The document went on to say that both sides bound themselves by the judgment of the Corân; and, where the Corân was silent, by the acknowledged precedents of Islam. To the Umpires, the guarantee of both Aly and Muâvia was given of safety for themselves and for their families; and the promise of the people that their judgment should be followed. On their part, the Umpires swore that they would judge righteously, so as to stay hostilities and reconcile the Faithful. The decision was to be delivered after six months, or later if the Umpires saw cause for delay, and at some neutral spot midway between Kûfa and Damascus. Meanwhile hostilities should be mutually suspended.[2] The writing, having been

[1] An angry passage is given as occurring between Amru and Aly, but it reads like an Abbasside invention. When Amru objected to Aly being named 'Caliph,' or 'Commander of the Faithful,' in the deed, Aly recalled to those around him the similar occurrence at Hodeibia. He said that when he himself, on that occasion, was reducing the truce to writing, the Coreish objected to Mahomet being styled in it *The Prophet of the Lord*. 'Well do I remember,' continued Aly, 'when the Prophet desired me, at their bidding, to erase the words; and then, when I hesitated, he blotted them out with his own hand, and said to me, "The day will come when thou, too, shalt be called on to make a like concession, and thou shalt agree thereto."' 'Out upon thee!' cried Amru; 'dost thou liken us unto the Pagan Arabs, being good believers?' 'And when,' said Aly, answering indirectly, 'shall the Wicked not have a head, nor the Faithful an enemy?' Whereupon Amru swore that he never would sit in company with Aly again; and Aly, on his part, expressed a similar determination. This conversation may possibly have had some foundation in fact, but it is abundantly coloured by Abbasside imagination. For the scene at Hodeibia, see *Life of Mahomet*, p. 372.

[2] Some make the interval arranged for to have been *eight* months. The ordinary term named by tradition is to Ramadhân or February (A.D. 658), which was

duly executed and signed, was numerously witnessed by leading chiefs on either side. Ashtar alone refused: 'Never again,' he said, 'should I acknowledge this to be mine own right hand, were it to touch a deed the like of this.'

Aly returns to Kûfa, and Muâvia to Damascus.

And so the armies, having buried their dead, quitted this memorable but undecisive battle-field. Aly retired to Kûfa; and Muâvia, his point for the present gained, to Damascus. As Aly entered Kûfa, he heard wailing on every side. A chief man, whom he bade to pacify the mourners, answered: 'O Caliph, it is not as if but two or three had been slain; of this clan hard by, alone, an hundred and fourscore lie buried at Siffîn. There is not a house but the women are weeping in it for their dead.'

Discord at Kûfa.

The slaughter, indeed, had been great on both sides.[1] And what gave point to Aly's loss was that the truce was but a hollow thing, with no hope in it of lasting peace or reconciliation. The Arab faction, to whose insolent demands Aly had yielded, was more estranged than ever. When the men of Kûfa murmured at the compromise, all that he could reply was this: that the mutinous soldiery had extorted the agreement from him; and that having pledged his faith, he could not now withdraw. He had thrown in his lot with traitors and regicides, and was now reaping the bitter fruit. Muâvia alone had gained.

seven or eight months from the date of the truce; others name Shabân, or January, making the interval six; and this is the commonly received account.

[1] The Persian Tabari gives the slain on both sides from first to last at 40,000, out of a total force of 130,000 men. Making every allowance for exaggeration, the carnage must have been great. The names of only a few 'Companions' are given; but now these were rapidly disappearing from the scene, as the period of a whole generation had elapsed since the Hegira. The chief fighting, moreover, was between the Bedouins; those from the north, as a rule, being on Aly's side, and the Arabs of the south on that of Muâvia. The numbers from Mecca and Medîna were comparatively small. The prisoners taken on both sides were released. Amru is spoken of as having advised to put them to death, but this is altogether unlikely.

CHAPTER XI.

THE KHAREJITES, OR THEOCRATIC FACTION, REBEL AGAINST ALY.

A.H. XXXVII. A.D. 657.

The Arab faction taken in by appeal to Corân.

THE quick sagacity of Amru had never been turned to better account than when he proposed to the army of Kûfa that the Corân should be the arbiter between them. To be judged by the Book of the Lord had been their cry from the beginning. The sacred text gave no countenance to the extravagant pretensions of the Coreish, nor to their (so-called) empire of favouritism and tyranny. Its precepts were based on the brotherhood of the Faithful; and the Prophet himself had enjoined on his people the absolute equality of all.[1] No sooner, therefore, was it proclaimed than, as Amru anticipated, the Arab chiefs, caught in the snare, took up the cry, and pledged themselves thereto.

Dissatisfaction of the Arab, or theocratic, faction.

Reflection soon tarnished the prospect. They had forgotten how narrow was the issue which the Umpires had to decide. The Bedouins were fighting not for one Caliph or the other, but against the pretensions of the Coreish at large. It was this that nerved them to the sanguinary conflict. 'If the Syrians conquer,' cried Yezîd ibn Cays to his followers of Bussorah and Kûfa, 'ye are undone. Again ye will be ground down by tyrants like the minions of Othmân. They will possess themselves as heretofore of the conquests of Islam, as if, forsooth, these had descended to them by inheritance, and not been won by our good swords. We shall lose our grasp both of this world and of the next.' Such were

[1] See above, p. 226.

the evils which they dreaded, for which they had slain Othmân, and from which they had now been fighting for deliverance. By the appointment of Abu Mûsa for their Umpire, what had they obtained? It was theocratic rule they had been dreaming of, and now they were drifting back to the old *régime*. The Umpires would decide simply as between Muâvia and Aly; and, whatever their verdict, the despotism of the past would be riveted more firmly than ever. Nothing of the kind they really wanted had been gained, nor was there any prospect of its being gained, by arbitration.

They draw off into hostile camp near Kûfa.

Burdened with these thoughts, a body of 12,000 men fell out from Aly's ranks on their homeward journey; and, keeping the same direction towards Kûfa, marched side by side with the army, at some little distance off in the desert. Loud and violent in their speech, they beat about their neighbours in rude Bedouin fashion with their whips, and reproached one another for having abandoned the cause of Islam to the hands of godless arbitrators; while some few amongst them were uneasy at having betrayed the Caliph on the field of battle, and at having now separated themselves from the body of the Faithful. In this frame of mind they avoided Kûfa, but encamped in its vicinity, at the village of Harôra.[1] They chose for themselves a temporary leader. But their resolve was, that when they gained the ascendency, they would no longer have any prince or Caliph, nor any oath of allegiance but to THE LORD alone; and would vest the administration of affairs in a Council of State. This theocratic dream was not confined to the schismatics at Harôra, but had widely leavened the factious and fanatical population of Kûfa. Aly, aware of the danger, sent his cousin, Mohammed son of Abbâs, to reason with the seceding body, but to no effect. He then proceeded to their camp himself, and gained over their leader, Yezîd, by the promise of the government of Ispahan.

[1] Hence the seceders are sometimes called *Harôrites*.

He urged, and with good ground, that, so far from being responsible for 'the godless compromise,' he had been driven to accept the Arbitration against his better judgment by their own wayward and persistent obstinacy; that the Umpires were bound by the terms of the truce to deliver their decision in accordance with the sacred text, which equally with himself the theocrats held to be the final guide; and that, if the Umpires' deliverance should after all turn out to be in disregard of it, he would without a moment's hesitation reject the same, and again go forth at their head to fight against the enemies of the Faith.

They are pacified by Aly.

There was a strange mingling of innocence and simplicity in these Seceders, with a fanatical indifference to the distinctions of vice and virtue, and a readiness to perpetrate any crime, whether against the person or the State, so that it forwarded the cause they had at heart, namely, 'the Rule of the Lord,' and the setting up of that which they conceived to be His kingdom.

And retire to their homes.

For the present they were pacified by the assurances of the Caliph. They broke up their camp and returned to their homes, there to await the decision of the Umpires.

CHAPTER XLI.

DECISION OF THE UMPIRES.

A.H. XXXVII. A.D. 658.

The interregnum.

THE interval passed uneasily. Muâvia ruled in Syria; Aly, over the rest of the Moslem world. Neither, for the moment, interfered with the other. The empire held itself in suspense.

The Umpires meet. Ramadhân, A.H. XXXVII. Feb. A.D. 658.

Within the time appointed, Amru appeared at Dûma, and shortly after, Abu Mûsa. Each was followed, according to agreement, by a retinue of four hundred horsemen.[1] Thither also, to the neutral spot, flocked multitudes from Irâc and from Syria, from Mecca and Medîna. With intense interest they watched the strange proceeding, which (as they expected) was about to decide the future of Islam. The leading chiefs of the Coreish were also there; some, we are told, with the distant hope that haply the choice might fall on one of themselves.[2]

[1] Dûma, to the extreme north of the peninsula, lies half-way between Irâc and Syria, thus fulfilling the conditions of the truce. Some place the scene at Adzroh.

Tabari (Persian translation) represents Abu Mûsa as at first appearing unattended, and then, at Amru's suggestion, sending for the stipulated guard. It came under command of the Bedouin chief Shoreih, who, we are told, carried an insolent message from his master Aly to Amru, warning him against improper motives. Amru resented the imputation, and an altercation ensued. The tradition is from Alyite sources; but one can hardly credit Aly with so indelicate a proceeding as the attempt by threats to influence his adversary's Umpire. The whole story is in the vein of Abbasside abuse, which tramples on the memories of Muâvia and Amru; and here we may well reject it in the interest of Aly himself.

[2] Among those who entertained expectations of the Caliphate are named Abdallah son of Zobeir, the usurper of later days; and Mohammed son of

And confer with each other.

The Umpires met in a pavilion pitched for the occasion; and beneath it, a private conference was held between the two alone. The account given by our authorities of what passed between them, is very brief. The result we must accept, but the colloquy which led to it is altogether of an uncertain kind. The gist of it is as follows. Abu Mûsa, pressed by his astute colleague, admitted that the putting of Othmân to death was a wicked and unjustifiable thing. 'Then why,' rejoined Amru, 'wilt thou not take Muâvia, the avenger of blood, for his successor?' 'If it were a mere question of blood-feud or kinsmanship,' Abu Mûsa answered, 'there were Othmân's sons with a nearer claim. Succession to the throne, however, was a matter to be determined, not by such considerations, but by the vote of the chief Companions of the Prophet.' Amru (so the story runs) then proposed his own son: 'A just and good man,' replied Abu Mûsa, 'but one whom thou hast already made to take sides in the civil war; and, Amru! we must above all things beware of kindling mutiny again amongst the Arab tribes.' A similar objection shut out Abdallah son of Zobeir; and the son of Omar was put aside as not having qualities fitting him for command. 'Then,' asked Amru, after all the possible candidates had been named and negatived, 'what may be the judgment that thou wouldest give?' 'My judgment,' answered Abu Mûsa, 'would be to depose both Aly and Muâvia, and then leave the people free to choose whom they will.' 'Thy judgment is also mine,' said Amru promptly; 'let us go forth.'

The judgment.

The people, in breathless expectation of the impending announcement, crowded round the pavilion as the Umpires issued from it. 'Let them know,' said Amru to his fellow, 'that we are agreed.' Abu Mûsa advanced, and with voice loud

Talha. Opinion varies as to whether Mohammed son of Abu Bekr was a candidate or not. Abdallah son of Omar was present, but without any pretensions to the Caliphate.

and clear,[1] said: 'We are agreed upon a decision such as, we trust, will reconcile the people, and reunite the empire.' 'He speaketh true,' said Amru: 'step forth, O Abu Mûsa, and pronounce thy judgment.'[2] Then spoke Abu Mûsa: 'Ye people! we have considered the matter well. We see no other course so likely to restore peace and concord amongst the people, as to depose Aly and Muâvia, both the one and the other. After that, ye shall choose a fit man in their room. This is my judgment.' He stepped aside, and Amru advancing said: 'Ye have heard the sentence of Abu Mûsa. He hath deposed his fellow; and so do I too depose him. But as for my Chief, Muâvia, him do I confirm. He is the heir of Othmân, and as avenger of his blood, the best entitled to succeed.'

Deposing Aly.

The assembly was thunderstruck. Even the Syrians had never dreamed of Muâvia achieving such a triumph; nor had it entered the minds of those on Aly's side, that their Umpire could be overreached thus shamefully. 'What could I do?' cried Abu Mûsa, assailed on every hand; 'he agreed with me, then swerved aside.' 'No fault of thine,' said the son of Abbâs: 'it was the fault of those who put thee in the place.' Overwhelmed with reproaches, Abu Mûsa made his escape and fled to Mecca, where he thenceforward lived

The people thunderstruck.

[1] He had a beautiful voice, 'clear and sweet as a flute' when he recited the Corân.

[2] At this point Mohammed son of Abbâs is represented as interposing with these words: 'Out upon thee, Abu Mûsa! he hath overreached thee if indeed ye be agreed, and now he putteth thee forward. Let him speak first, and thou after him. He is a deceiver; he will make thee speak, then turn round and undo thy words.' But Abu Mûsa did not listen. Any such interposition, however, is highly improbable. For it could hardly have been foreseen in what particular way Amru was about to overreach Abu Mûsa. Moreover the private conversation and agreement in the pavilion between the Umpires is itself open to doubt; at any rate, it is deeply coloured by Abbasside touches. But we have no other narrative, and must take the story as we find it. And although strange, and, in some of the details, improbable, it must be admitted that the transaction is not inconsistent, as a whole, with the wily character of Amru, who made himself notorious for astuteness and 'sharp practice.'

Muâvia saluted Caliph by the Syrians.

in obscurity.[1] In the heat of his indignation, the commander of the Kûfa bodyguard made an onset upon Amru, and was roughly handling him, when the people interposed to set him free. Amru returned forthwith to Damascus, where by acclamation Muâvia was saluted Caliph by the Syrians.

The two Caliphs curse each other in the daily service.

How the startling intelligence affected Aly, may be judged by the fact that to the prescribed daily service he added a petition cursing by their names, Muâvia, Amru, and several of their chief adherents. Muâvia was nothing loth to follow his example. And so the world was edified by the spectacle, in the cathedral temples of Islam, of the rival Commanders of the Faithful uttering maledictions in their daily prayers, the one against the other.[2]

[1] We do not hear more of Abu Mûsa, who, however, survived to A.H. 52, or, as others say, to A.H. 42. Some of his grandsons held judicial office.

Many of the angry speeches at Dûma by the chief men, who were bewildered at the strange *dénouement*, have been preserved. These are some of them. *The son of Omar*: 'See what a pass Islam hath come to! Its great concern committed to two men; one who knoweth not right from wrong, the other a nincompoop.' *Abu Bekr's son*: 'Would that Abu Mûsa had died before this affair; it had been better for him.' Abu Mûsa himself is represented as abusing Amru in the language of the Corân: 'His likeness is as the likeness of a dog; if thou drive him away, he putteth forth his tongue; and if thou leave him alone, still he putteth forth his tongue.' (*Sura* vii. 77.) 'And thou,' retorted Amru, 'art like the donkey laden with books, and none the wiser for it.' (*Sura* vi. 25.) Shureih, commander of the Kûfa escort, flew at Amru, and they belaboured each other with their whips, till they were separated by the people. Shureih exclaimed that he only wished he had used his sword instead. But the tales are mostly of the Abbasside type, and we cannot implicitly receive them.

[2] The imprecation used by Aly has been preserved, as follows: 'O Lord, I beseech thee, let Muâvia be accursed, and Amru, and Abul Aûr, Habîb, Abdal Rahmân son of (the great) Khâlid, Dhahhâk son of Cays, and Welîd! Let them be accursed all!' Muâvia's imprecation, in the same way, included Aly, Ibn Abbâs, Hasan and Hosein (sons of Aly), and Ashtar.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE KHAREJITES, OR THEOCRATIC SEPARATISTS, DEFEATED AT NEHRWAN.

A.H. XXXVII. A.D. 658.

Aly's designs against Syria.

ALY, as the reader will suppose, was not content with heaping imprecations on his antagonist. He resolved on the immediate renewal of hostilities. But he had other work before him first in dealing with the fanatics nearer home.

Hostile attitude of the theocratic faction. Ramadhân, A.H. XXXVII. Jan. A.D. 658.

Ever since they had broken up their camp at Harôra, these, instead of settling down in sentiments of loyalty and peace, had been gaining in aggressive force and stubbornness. There should (such was their cry) be no oath of fealty but to the Lord alone, the Mighty and the Glorious. To swear allegiance either to Aly or Muâvia was in derogation of that great name. 'Ye are both of you,' they would say, 'coursing along, neck and neck, in the race of apostasy: the Syrians run after Muâvia whether the way be right or wrong, and ye swear for Aly through black and white. It is nought but blasphemy.' So they formulated their creed into one short sentence: *No judgment, but the Lord's alone*; and this they insolently flung in Aly's teeth.[1] In vain the Caliph argued, as he had

[1] The formula was: *La hukm illa lillâhi.* The political creed of the Separatists was that, Believers being absolutely equal, there should be no Caliph, nor oath of allegiance sworn to any man; but that the government should be in the hands of a Council of State elected by the people. When the loyalists heard this, to counteract the evil, they said, 'Come, let us swear a second oath of fealty unto Aly, namely, that we shall support all that he supporteth, and oppose all that he opposeth.' 'Now truly,' replied the Separatists, 'ye are running, ye and the Syrians, neck and neck, in the race of infidelity. They follow Muâvia through thick and thin, and ye swear by Aly black and white.' 'Nay,' replied the loyalists, 'Aly never held forth his hand to receive the oath, but on

done before, that the Arbitration had been forced upon him by themselves. 'It is true,' they would readily reply; 'but we have repented of that lapse; and thou must repent of it likewise, or else we shall fight against thee; and if so be that we are slain, we shall meet our Lord with joy.' Aly yet hoped to gain them over. He bore with their seditious talk; and in a public address in the Great Mosque at Kûfa, he declared his intention of treating them with forbearance. 'They should have free access to the mosques for prayer. If they joined his army, they should share the booty like the rest. So long as they refrained themselves from any overt act of disloyalty, he would use no force of arms against them.'

Aly's forbearance.

The Khârejites march to Nehrwân. Shawwâl, A.H. XXXVII. March, A.D. 658.

Instead of softening the fanatics, this moderation only tended to embolden them. When the Umpires' judgment was announced, they were elated at a result which in their eyes amply justified their secession at Siffîn. They held frequent meetings in secret, and resolved on raising the Divine standard. They looked for heavenly interposition; but even if they perished, it would be in a righteous cause, sure to triumph in the end; they would, at any rate, be protesting against a wicked world, and become inheritors of a blessed futurity. In the month following the Arbitration, they began accordingly, in concert with the brethren who sympathised with them at Bussorah, to leave their homes by stealth. The party from Bussorah, five hundred strong, was pursued by the governor, Ibn Abbâs; but they effected their escape, and joined the bands which in greater force had issued forth from Kûfa. Secular power, and the dignity and pomp of this life, were abhorrent from these Covenanters' creed; and it was only after many had declined the dangerous pre-eminence, and then simply as a temporary expedient to meet the present

condition of following the Book and the Sunnat of the Prophet. It is you that have made us think of this new oath. As for Aly, he is altogether in the right, and whosoever opposeth him is wandering in the paths of error.' So spake Ziâd the son of Nadhr; but they heeded him not.

necessity, that a chief was prevailed on to accept the supreme command. The design was to occupy the city of Medâin, upon the Tigris, and there, under a Council of Representatives, establish theocratic rule as a model to the ungodly cities around. But the governor had timely warning, and repulsed the attempt. They passed on, and crossed the river farther up in various bodies, and, appointing Nehrwân as their rendezvous, assembled there to the number of 4,000.

Aly orders levy for Syrian campaign.

Aly did not at first recognise the serious character and bearing of the movement. The number of the fanatics was comparatively insignificant; and he hoped that, when once they saw their former comrades in arms marching against the graceless Syrians, they would not hesitate again to join his standard. So he mounted the pulpit and harangued the men of Kûfa. He reprobated the Umpires, because they had cast the Book of the Lord, equally with the precedent of the Prophet, behind their backs. Both were apostates, rejected of the Lord, of his Prophet, and of all good men. 'Wherefore,' he concluded, 'we must begin to fight our battle again at the point where, on the eve of victory, we were forced to leave it off. Prepare then to march for Syria, and be ready in your camp without the city, by the second day of the coming week.' Then he indited a despatch to the fanatics at Nehrwân. It was couched in terms similar to his address, and ended thus: 'Now, therefore, when ye have read this, return forthwith and join the army. I am marching against the common enemy, yours and ours alike; and we have come back again to the state of things when aforetime at Siffîn ye were fighting by my side.' In reply Aly received an insulting message: 'If he acknowledged his apostasy and repented thereof, then they would see whether anything could be arranged between them; otherwise they cast him off as an ungodly heretic.' The stiff-necked theocrats were thereupon, for the present, left to their own devices, and the business of raising levies for Syria proceeded

And summons the theocrats, who refuse to join him.

Aly marches for Syria.

with. But little enthusiasm was anywhere displayed in the cause of Aly. Of the 60,000 fighting men drawing stipendiary allowances in Bussorah, 3,000 were with difficulty got together. At Kûfa, after vain appeal to the loyalty of the city, a conscription was ordered through the heads of clans; and thus at length an army of threescore and five thousand men of every rank and class was brought into the field.[1]

But is diverted by the excesses of the fanatic host.

With this imposing force, Aly had already commenced his march on Syria, when tidings reached him that the fanatics were committing horrid and cold-blooded outrages in the country round about their camp.[2] A messenger was sent to make inquiry; but he too was put to death by the insurgents. The tidings of their proceedings became more and more alarming, and the men of Kûfa demanded to be led against them; 'for how,' said they, 'can we leave such outlaws unpunished and at large behind us, and our homes exposed to their unlicensed cruelties?' Aly himself, seeing that this must be done, changed his course eastward, crossed the Tigris, and marched against the fanatics. When now near to Nehrwân, he sent a messenger forward, to demand that the murderers should be delivered up. 'Surrender these to justice,' he said, 'and ye shall be left alone, until the Lord grant us victory in Syria, and then haply He shall have turned your hearts again toward us.' They replied that 'they were all equally responsible for what had passed,

[1] Of these, 40,000 were enrolled stipendiaries, 17,000 youths below the ordinary fighting age, and 8,000 slaves. On finding the people indifferent, Aly first induced certain chiefs of influence to lead the way, and then made the heads of every clan and every household furnish the names of their dependants. The backwardness might have been in some measure due to the feeling that the fanatics should first be dealt with as a danger immediately threatening Kûfa. But apart from this, the influence of Aly was weak and precarious. Never enthusiastic on his side, the people were becoming more and more indifferent to him. This was partly owing, no doubt, to the strong feeling against the pretensions of the Coreish that prevailed at Kûfa.

[2] These outrages were of the most barbarous character. For example, a traveller refusing to confess Khârejite tenets was put to death, and his wife, great with child, ripped up with the sword; three women of the Beni Tay were killed, &c.

and that the blood of the ungodly heretics they had slain was lawful to them.' A parley ensued, in which the Caliph through his captains expostulated with the misguided fanatics, and offered quarter to all who should come over to his army, or retire peaceably to their homes. Some obeyed the call and came over; 500 went off to a neighbouring Persian town, and many more dispersed in other directions to their homes at Kûfa or elsewhere. Eighteen hundred remained upon the field, martyrs to the theocratic creed. With the wild battle cry, *On to Paradise!* they rushed upon the Kûfa lances, and were slain to a man. Aly's loss was trifling.[1]

The fanatics at Nehrwân dispersed and slain.

It would have been better for the peace of Islam if none of the four thousand had escaped. The snake was scotched, not killed. The fanatic spirit was strangely catching; and the theocratic cause continued to be canvassed vigorously and unceasingly, but in secret, at Bussorah and at Kûfa. However hopeless the attainment of their object might appear, the fanatics were nerved, if not by the expectation of Divine aid, at the least by the sure hope of a Martyr's crown. In the following year armed bodies once and again appeared unexpectedly in the field, denouncing Aly, and proclaiming that the Kingdom of the Lord was at hand. One after another these bands of insurgent fanatics were cut to pieces, or put to flight with ease. But the effect was unsettling; and it could not but endamage the name and power of Aly, who now reaped the fruit of his weak compromise with the enemies of Othmân, and his neglect to bring them to justice. Fanatical in their extravagant

The Khârejites again appear in the field. A.H. XXXVII. A.D. 658.

[1] Only seven men were killed on Aly's side. The burden of the fanatic cry was that Aly had committed a deadly sin in consenting to refer to human judgment that which appertained alone to the Divine; and that he must repent of his apostasy. Aly replied, that being a true believer he would belie himself if he admitted his apostasy.

Abu Ayûb, as he speared one of the fanatic leaders, cried, 'I give thee joy of hell fire!' Aly affirmed the imprecation, thereby implying that in his judgment the fanatics had damned themselves by going out of the pale of Islam and of its covenanted mercies.

They become a thorn in the Moslem empire.

doctrine, they were too sincere to combine with any of the political sects, and hence they never came near to leaving any permanent mark of their theocratic creed behind them. But both at this period and in succeeding reigns, we find them at intervals gathering up their strength to assail the empire, and as often beaten back. Ever and anon, for years, and even for ages, these *Khârejites* still 'went forth'[1] on their desperate errand, a thorn in the side of the Caliphate, and a terror to the well-disposed.

[1] This is the meaning of the name: *Khârejite*, one who 'goes forth,' rebelling against the government with the demand for a theocracy.

CHAPTER XLIII.

REVOLT OF EGYPT.

A.H. XXXVIII. A.D. 658.

Aly abandons the war against Syria. End of XXXVII. April, A.D. 658.

HAVING thus disposed of the fanatics at Nehrwân, and recrossed the Tigris, Aly, at the head of his army, turned his face again towards Syria. But the soldiers urged that, before setting out upon so long a campaign, their armour needed refitting. 'Let us return for a little to our homes,' they said, 'to furbish up our swords and lances, and to replenish our quivers.' Aly consenting, they marched back and pitched their camp at Nokheila. This being close to Kûfa, the soldiers dropped off in small parties thither; and so it came to pass that, in a short time, excepting commanding officers, the camp was left almost empty. Aly, finding that no man returned, became impatient, and himself reentering Kûfa, again harangued the people on the obligation to go forth with him and make war on Syria. But exhortation and reproach fell equally on listless ears. There was no response. Aly lost heart. The Syrian expedition fell through; and no attempt was made to resume it further.

Position of Aly and Muâvia.

Thus closed the thirty-seventh year of the Hegira. The situation was unchanged. Muâvia, with now a colourable title to the Caliphate, remained undisturbed in his position as virtual monarch of Syria, strong in the loyalty and affections of the province; while Aly, mortified by an indifferent and partly alienated people, was now to experience a severer trial.

We turn to Egypt. Before the Syrian war, as already stated, there was a powerful faction in that dependency of

Egypt revolts. A.H. XXXVIII. A.D. 658.

Aly's Caliphate, especially at Kharanba, siding with those who demanded satisfaction for the blood of Othmân; and Cays, having been recalled for leaving these dissentients alone, Mohammed son of Abu Bekr had been appointed in his room. Casting aside the waiting policy of his wiser predecessor, Mohammed at once summoned the recusants, either to submit themselves to him, or to be gone from Egypt. They refused, but masking for the present their hostile designs, watched the issue of the struggle at Siffîn. When the armies separated from that battle-field, leaving Muâvia still master of Syria, they gained heart and began to assume the offensive. A party sent against them was defeated, and the leader slain; and a second attempt at retrieving the loss met with a like fate. The slumbering elements of revolt were everywhere aroused.

Ashtar, appointed governor, is poisoned.

Aly saw now the mistake which he had made, but too late. He would have reappointed Cays; but Cays declined again to take the post. The only other fitted for the emergency was Ashtar the regicide, whom he summoned from his command at Nisibîn, and sent off in haste to Egypt. But on the way he met with an untimely death, having been poisoned, at the instigation (it is said) of Muâvia, by a chief on the Egyptian border with whom he rested.[1] There was joy at the death of the arch-regicide throughout the land of Syria, where he had been greatly feared. Aly was equally cast down by the untoward event.

[1] The fact is mentioned *famâ clamante*, and there is no counter evidence. It was, no doubt, of vital importance to Muâvia to be rid of Ashtar; but this may of itself have suggested the report; and in the East, sudden deaths are generally set down to poisoning, a charge easy to make and difficult to disprove. Muâvia, we are told, promised the chief, who was collector of the tithes and revenues at the head of the Red Sea, immunity from taxation for ever after, if he committed the foul deed. But as these histories were all compiled more or less under Abbassido influences, and the evidence is absolutely one-sided, we must be on our guard against the continual abuse and depreciation of the Omeyyad dynasty. The portion of the original Tabari, now in the press may possibly throw light on this and other obscure passages of our history.

His only resource was now to bid Mohammed son of Abu Bekr hold on, and do what he could to retrieve his position. But the faction which favoured Muâvia gained ground daily; and when, shortly after, Amru, at the head of a few thousand men, crossed the border, he was joined by an overwhelming body of insurgents. Mohammed, after a vain attempt to meet his enemy in the field, was easily put to flight. In the struggle he was killed, and his body ignominiously burned in an ass's skin.[1] Thus Egypt was lost to Aly; and Amru, as the lieutenant of the rival Caliph, again became its governor.

Mohammed killed and Egypt conquered by Amru for Muâvia. Safar, A.H. XXXVIII. July, A.D. 658.

The loss of Egypt was the harder for Aly to bear, as undoubtedly it might have been averted but for his removal of Cays; and even now it might have been retrieved if the men of Kûfa had not been heartless in his cause. Over and again he implored them to hasten to the defence of Egypt. With difficulty two thousand men were got together; but after so long a delay that they had hardly marched before news of the defeat made it necessary to recall them. Aly thereupon ascended the pulpit, and upbraided the people for their spiritless and disloyal attitude. For fifty days, he had been urging them to go forth, to avenge their fallen brethren, and to help those who were still struggling for him in the field. Like a restive wayward camel, that refused its burden, they had held back. 'And now,' he said, in grief and bitterness of spirit, 'the son of Abu Bekr is fallen a martyr, and Egypt hath departed from us.'

Mortification of Aly at the loss, and at the lukewarmness of Kûfa.

[1] According to some he was slain in battle; but the more received story is that he was put to death by an insurgent leader, who was so inveterate against the regicides that he had put his own son to death for being of that party. Notwithstanding that Amru had given Mohammed quarter, this chief, we are told, slew him in cold blood, and having put his body in an ass's skin, burned it in the flames. Ayesha was inconsolable at her brother's fate, and (although her politics were all against Aly) she was now led to curse Muâvia and Amru in her daily prayers, and thenceforward ate no roasted meat nor pleasant food until her death.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE REMAINDER OF ALY'S REIGN.

A.H. XXXVIII.—XL. A.D. 658-660.

Remainder of Aly's reign.

No gleam of fortune lighted up the remaining days of Aly's reign. What with the rising of fanatics at home, and the threats of the rival Caliphate abroad, his life was one continual struggle. And, moreover, the daily exhibition of indifference and disloyalty in Kûfa, the city of his choice, was a burden and mortification hard to bear.

Insurrection at Bussorah suppressed. A.H. XXXVIII. A.D. 658.

The loss of Egypt, and the cruel death of Mohammed son of Abu Bekr, preyed upon his mind. He withdrew into the strictest privacy. Ibn Abbâs, fearful lest his cousin should resign the Caliphate, or do some other rash and unadvised thing, set out from Bussorah to visit and comfort him. This becoming known to Muâvia, he took the opportunity, during the absence of Ibn Abbâs, to send an emissary with the view of stirring up the disaffected elements at Bussorah. Among certain of the clans, he was sure of finding many who, equally with himself, sought to avenge the blood of Othmân; few were zealously attached to the cause of Aly; the remainder were mostly *Khârejites*, of the theocratic faction, now as hostile to Aly as to Muâvia himself. Abdallah, the Syrian agent, carrying a letter to the citizens of Bussorah, was so well received, that Ziâd, who held temporary charge of the city, was forced to retire with the treasures and the gubernatorial pulpit into the stronghold of a loyal clan, from whence he wrote for help to Kûfa. Aly at once despatched a chief of influence among

the Beni Rabia, the leading tribe at Bussorah, who were by his persuasion induced to rally round Ziâd. After severe and bloody fighting in the city, attended by various success, the rebels were at last defeated, and driven for refuge to a neighbouring castle. There they were surrounded, and the castle having been set on fire, Abdallah, with seventy of his followers, perished in the flames. The victory was decisive for the time; but the insurrection had brought to light the alarming spread of disaffection, and showed how precarious was Aly's grasp upon the Bedouin races of this factious city.

Khârejite émeutes.

The spirit of disturbance and unrest was not confined to Egypt and to Bussorah. During the year, we read of five or six occasions on which considerable bands of Khârejites were impelled by their theocratic creed to go forth and raise the standard of rebellion. One after another they met the common fate of slaughter and dispersion. But though crushed, the frequent repetition of such desperate enterprises, the fruit of a wild and reckless fanaticism, had a disturbing effect on the capital and the empire at large. The most serious of these risings was that led by Khirrît; and it is the more remarkable, because this chief had with his tribe, the Beni Nâjia, fought bravely by the side of Aly in the battles both of the Camel and Siffîn. He was now driven, like many others, by his strong convictions to rebel. Boldly approaching the throne, he told Aly that since he, as Caliph, had referred a Divine issue to the arbitration of man, he could obey him no more, neither stand up behind him in the Mosque at prayer; but henceforth was sworn to be his enemy. Aly, with his usual patience, said that he would argue out the matter with him, and arranged a meeting for the purpose. But the night before the appointed day, Khirrît stole away from the city with all his following. 'Gone,' said Aly, 'to the devil; lost, like the doomed Thâmudites!' They were pursued, but by so small a party

Rebellion of Khirrît in Southern Persia, A.H. XXXVIII. A.D. 658,

that they held it at bay, and in the end effected their escape to Ahwâz and Râm Hormuz. There they raised the Persians, Kurds, and Christian mountaineers, by the specious and inflammatory cry that the payment of taxes to an ungodly Caliph must be renounced. With a band of apostate Arabs, they kindled revolt throughout the province of Fars, and put the governor to flight. A force from Bussorah drove them to the shores of the Indian Ocean. But luring the people by delusive arguments and promises, they still gained head; and it was not till after a bloody battle, in which Khirrît lost his life, that the supremacy of the Caliphate was re-established in Southern Persia. The Mussulman prisoners in this campaign were set at liberty on their taking afresh the oath of allegiance; but the Christians, five hundred in number, were all marched away to be sold into captivity. The women and children, as they were torn from their protectors, wailed with loud and bitter cries. The hearts of many were softened. Mascala, Governor of Ardshîr, touched by the scene, took upon himself the cost of ransoming these Christian captives, and set them free. Aly, hearing of it, demanded from him immediate payment at a thousand pieces for each captive; and Mascala, unable to pay down so great a sum, fled and joined Muâvia.[1]

suppressed, and Khirrît slain.

Christian captives.

[1] The incident is significant of the attitude of the Moslems at this period towards Christian captives, which certainly had not softened since the time of Mahomet. On hearing of Mascala's humanity, the commander of the army said, 'If I had had any notion that he did this thing out of false pity for the Christians, and thus cast a slight upon Islam, I would, at the risk even of alienating all the Beni Bekr (Mascala's tribe), have beheaded him on the spot.' Aly's remark was: 'The first act of Mascala (in offering to take upon himself the ransom of the prisoners) was the act of a prince; his second (in avoiding his obligations and going over to Muâvia) the act of a robber and an outlaw.' So he gave orders for his house to be razed, and all his slaves set free.

From Damascus, Mascala sent a letter to his brother at Kûfa, offering him, on the part of Muâvia, a command and great honour if he would come over to him. The messenger, a Christian of the Beni Tâghlib, was seized and carried before Aly, who ordered his hands to be cut off, so that he died. His brother wrote verses in reply from Kûfa, from which Mascala gathered the concealed meaning that the messenger had lost his life. Whereupon the Beni Tâghlib received blood-money from Muâvia. The verses have been preserved.

Ziâd suppresses rebellion in Persia, A.H. XXXIX. A.D. 659,

The defeat of the Khârejites did not at once restore peace to Persia; for Fars and Kermân threw off their allegiance, and expelled their governors. To quell the spreading insurrection, Aly was happy in the selection of Ziâd, the Chancellor of Bussorah, a man, as we have seen, of conspicuous administrative ability. He carried with him a great court and retinue; but it was mainly by his ready tact in setting one rebellious prince against another, and by well-appointed promises and favours, that he succeeded in restoring peace. Aly recognised his service by conferring on him the government of Fars; and his administration there became so famous as to recall to Persian memories the happy age of Nushirwân. He fixed his court at Istakhr (Persepolis), and built a castle there, in connection with which his name was remembered for many ages following.

and is appointed Governor of Fars.

Expeditions from Syria against Irâc. A.H. XXXVIII.–IX. A.D. 658–9.

Though successful thus in Persia, Aly was still subject to trouble and molestation nearer home. Muâvia, relieved now from apprehension on the side of Egypt, began to annoy his rival by frequent raids on Arabia and the cities beyond the Syrian desert. The object was various—now to ravage a province or surprise a citadel, now to exact the tithe from the Bedouin tribes, or, again, to force upon them allegiance to the Syrian Caliphate. Such inroads, though not always successful, inspired a sense of insecurity; and, what was worse than that, they betrayed more clearly than ever the lukewarmness of the people in the cause of Aly. These would stir neither hand nor foot to repel the Syrians invading cities so close to them even as Ain Tamr, Anbâr, and Hît. To show his displeasure at their listlessness and disobedience, Aly went forth himself into the field almost unattended. On this, the men of Kûfa, partly through shame, partly lured by the promise of increased stipends, marched to the defence of their frontier. During the year there were eight or ten inroads of this kind from Syria. Though eventually repelled, it was not always without loss in prisoners, plunder, and prestige. On one occasion, however,

Safar, A.H. XXXIX. June, A.D. 659.

Aly's commander, with a flying column, pursued the raiders back into the heart of Syria as far as Baalbek; and thence, turning northward, escaped by Ricca again into Irâc. On the other hand, Muâvia, to show his contempt for the power of Aly, made an incursion right across the plain of Upper Mesopotamia. For some days he remained encamped on the banks of the Tigris; and, after leisurely inspecting Mosul, which he had never seen before, made his way back again to Damascus unmolested.

Muâvia visits Mosul.

Raid of Bosor on Medîna, Mecca, and Yemen. A.H. XL. A.D. 660.

The fortieth year of the Hegira opened with a new grief for Aly. At the close of the year preceding, as the annual pilgrimage drew near, Muâvia sent Bosor, a brave but cruel captain of his host, with three thousand men into Arabia, to secure for him the allegiance of the sacred cities. As he drew nigh to Medîna, Abu Ayûb, the governor, fled to Kûfa, and Bosor entered unopposed. Proceeding to the Great Mosque, he mounted the sacred steps of the Prophet's pulpit, and, recalling Othmân to mind, thus addressed the people: 'O citizens of Medîna! The Aged Man! Where is the aged, grey-haired man whom, but as yesterday, and in this very place, I swore allegiance to? Verily, but for my promise to Muâvia, who bade me stay the sword, I had not left here a soul alive!' Then he threatened the leading citizens with death if they refused to acknowledge Muâvia as their Caliph; and so, fearing for their lives, all took the oath of allegiance to the Omeyyad ruler. Passing on to Mecca, the same scene was enacted by the imperious envoy there, and with the same result.[1] Then he marched south to Yemen, where he committed great atrocities upon the adherents of Aly. The governor, Obeidallah son of Abbâs, escaped to his cousin at Kûfa. But two of his little children, falling into the tyrant's hands, were put to death in cold blood, as well as their Bedouin attendant, who ventured

He slays the infant children of Aly's cousin.

[1] Abu Mûsa, on this occasion, fled from Mecca for his life. The unfortunate man, ever since the Arbitration, was equally obnoxious to both sides.

to protest against the cruel act. An army of four thousand men was despatched in haste from Kûfa, but too late to stop these outrages; and Bosor made good his escape to Syria. The wretched peninsula fared no better at the hands of the relieving army. Many of the inhabitants of Najrân were put to death, because they belonged to the party of Othmân. The men of Mecca were forced to recall the oath they had just taken, and again do homage to Aly. Similarly, the citizens of Medîna swore allegiance to Hasan, son of Aly, at the point of the sword;[1] but no sooner were the troops gone, than Abu Horeira, of the opposite faction, resumed his functions as leader of the daily prayers. The cruel death of his cousin's infant children preyed on Aly more, perhaps, than all his other troubles put together; and he cursed Bosor in the daily service with a new and bitter imprecation. The disconsolate mother poured forth her sorrow in plaintive verse, some touching couplets of which still survive.[2]

Abdallah son of Abbâs retires to Mecca.

Yet another grief was in store for Aly. He had promoted his cousins, the sons of Abbâs, to great dignity, giving the chief command in Yemen to one, in Mecca to another, in Medîna to a third; while Abdallah, the eldest, held the government of Bussorah, the second city in his Caliphate. Complaints having reached the Court of certain irregularities in the administration of Bussorah, Aly called upon his cousin to render an account. Scorning to answer the demand, Abdallah threw up his office, and, carrying his treasures with him, retired to Mecca. Aly was much mortified at this

[1] Why to Hasan does not appear, as the hereditary principle of succession was not as yet thought of, either in Aly's or any other line.

[2] The mother, for example, apostrophising the assassin, speaks of her infants, with singular beauty and pathos, as pearls whose shell has been rudely torn asunder:

> Ah! who hath seen my two little ones—
> Darlings that lay hidden, as it were pearls within the fold of their shell?

As they were grandchildren of Abbâs, the Caliph's uncle, the incident naturally occupies a conspicuous position in Abbasside tradition. Aly cursed Bosor, praying that he might lose his intellect, and in answer to the prayer (so it is said) he became a hopeless, drivelling lunatic.

Ackîl, Aly's brother, deserts.

unfriendly act; and still more so by the desertion of his own brother, Ackîl, who went over to Muâvia.[1]

Aly, broken in spirit, concludes truce with Muâvia. A.H. XL. A.D. 660.

These troubles, crowding rapidly one upon another, entirely broke the spirit of Aly. He had no longer the heart to carry on hostilities with Syria. If he might secure the Eastern provinces in peaceful subjection to himself, it was all that he could hope for now. Accordingly, after lengthened correspondence, an armistice was concluded between Aly and Muâvia, by which they agreed to lay aside their arms, respect the territory of each other, and maintain a friendly attitude.

The double Caliphate.

It is possible that a double Caliphate thus recognised, in two separate and independent empires, by the Rulers of the East and of the West, might have been prolonged indefinitely, or even handed down in perpetuity, had not the tragical event occurred which will be narrated in the following chapter.

[1] The defection of Ackîl is not mentioned in the Persian Tabari. But the circumstance is not one of a kind likely to have been invented, or (as being opposed to the credit of the Prophet's family) perpetuated by tradition under Abbasside influence, if it had not been founded on fact. On the occasion, Aly gave vent to his grief in these lines, illustrating the proverb of Solomon, 'A brother is born for adversity':

> He is not a brother who quitteth thee in the dark and louring day;
> But rather he that abideth with thee then,
> Rejoicing in thy success, and weeping in thy misfortune.

Some traditions make the retirement of Abdallah from Bussorah to have occurred after Aly's death. But the fact, as stated above, is not likely to have been fabricated. Besides, the narrative is given in great detail and consistency. Abdallah received the summons of Aly to render an account of his government, with wrath and scorn, and retired from Bussorah, carrying his great riches with him. He was pursued by the citizens of Bussorah; but after some fighting, in which the rival tribes took part, he managed to get off to Mecca without further molestation.

CHAPTER XLV.

ASSASSINATION OF ALY.

A.H. XL. A.D. 661.

Three Khârejite fanatics conspire to assassinate Aly, Muâvia, and Amru. A.H. XL. A.D. 661.

THE theocratic Separatists were sorely troubled at the prospects of Islam. It was not that raids and robbery, dissension and strife, had been the order of the day. That they could bear, for bloodshed was more tolerable than apostasy. To the Khârejite, the cessation of war brought with it no peace of mind. A settled government was the ruin of his hopes. Aly having come to terms with Muâvia, there was no longer room to expect that the ungodly kingdoms of the earth would be overthrown, and the reign of righteousness established in their stead. Thus the theocratic party brooded over the blood that had been shed in vain upon the plain of Nehrwân and other fields of battle, and for the present abandoned themselves to despair. Many took refuge from the godless tyranny (as they called it) prevailing all around, in the sacred precincts of the Hejâz, where they might lament freely with one another over the miserable fate of Islam. As three of these thus mourned together, a gleam of hope suddenly shot across their path. 'Our blood need not have been thus shed in vain; let each of us kill one of the three oppressors of the Faithful; Islam may yet again be free, and the reign of the Lord appear.' It was one of the band of regicides that spoke; and so, as in the case of Othmân, but under another guise and urged by bolder hopes, the three again conspired against the State. The fatal resolve once taken, details were speedily arranged. Aly and Muâvia both must fall; and Amru also, not only as

the godless Arbitrator, but also as the likeliest successor to the throne left vacant by the other two. Each was to dispose of his fellow, as he presided at the morning service, on the same Friday when, in the month of Ramadhân, the cathedral Mosques of Kûfa, Damascus, and Fostât would be thronged with fasting worshippers. They dipped their swords in a powerful poison; and separated from one another, swearing that they would either fulfil the task or perish in the attempt. Amru escaped. He was sick that day, and the captain of his guard, presiding in the Mosque at prayers, fell a victim in his stead.[1] At Damascus, Muâvia was not so fortunate.[2] The blow fell upon him, and was near to being fatal. His physician declared that his life could be saved only by the cautery, or by a potent draught that would deprive him of the hope of further progeny. He shrank from the cautery, and chose the draught. The remedy was effectual, and he survived.

Amru escapes.

Muâvia wounded, but recovers.

At Kûfa things turned out differently. The conspirator Ibn Muljam, one of the Egyptian regicides, was able there to gain two desperate accomplices from the Beni Taym. The tribe, deeply imbued with the fanaticism of the day, had suffered severely in the massacre of Nehrwân, and ever since had nursed its resentment against the Caliph. Ibn Muljam loved Catâm, a beautiful maid of the same tribe, who having on that fatal day lost her father, her brother, and other near

Aly attacked by assassins in the Mosque of Kûfa.

[1] The assassin thought at first that he had accomplished his object; but, when taken before Amru, and seeing how the people made their obeisance to him, he discovered his mistake. 'Tyrant!' he exclaimed, 'it was for thee the blow was intended.' 'Thou intendedst me,' replied Amru, with characteristic brevity; 'but the Lord intended thee!' and the culprit was led away to execution. Like many of Amru's sayings, the words became a proverb.

[2] Muâvia was stabbed in the groin. Some say that the culprit was put to death. Others say, that one hand and the opposite foot (the punishment of a robber according to the Corân) were cut off, and that he was sent to Bussorah. There having begotten a son, Ziâd put him to death, saying, 'Thou hast begotten a son thyself, and hast made the Caliph impotent; thou shalt die.' Muâvia said, that having already Yezîd for his heir, he did not care for further offspring. I give the story as I find it.

relatives, was roused thereby to a savage ardour. 'Bring me,' said the maid to her lover, 'the head of Aly as my dower; if thou escapest alive, thou shalt enjoy me as thy guerdon here; if thou perish, thou shalt enjoy better than me above.' So she introduced him to Werdân, a warrior burning with the same spirit of revenge, and also to another accomplice, named Shuhîb. On the appointed morning, the latter, with Ibn Muljam, lay in wait on either side of the door leading into the crowded Mosque; if their blows should fail, Werdân, stationed outside, was in the confusion to rush upon Aly, and complete the work. At the time appointed, the Caliph entered the Mosque calling aloud as usual, *To prayers, ye people! To prayers!* Immediately he was set upon on either hand. Shuhîb's sword fell upon the lintel; but Ibn Muljam wounded the Caliph severely on the head and side. He was seized. The other two fled; one was cut to pieces, the other escaped in the tumult. Aly was carried into the palace, but retained strength sufficient to question the assassin, who was brought before him. Ibn Muljam declared boldly, that the deed had been forty days in contemplation; and during all that time he had prayed without ceasing to the Lord, 'that the Wickedest of mankind might meet his fate.' 'Then,' replied Aly, 'that must have been thyself.' So saying, he turned to his son, Hasan, and bade him keep the assassin in close custody: 'If I die, his life is forfeited to justice, and he shall be slain for the deed he hath done; but see,' said he, 'that thou mutilate him not, for that was forbidden by the Prophet.' During the day Omm Kolthûm went into the assassin's cell and cursed him, adding, what no doubt she was fain to believe, 'My father shall yet live.' 'Then, Lady,' replied the fanatic, 'whence these tears? Listen. That sword I bought for a thousand pieces, and a thousand more it cost to poison it. None may escape a wound from it.'

It soon became evident that the wound indeed was mortal. They asked the Caliph whether if he died, it was

Aly's death. 17 Ramadhân, A.H. XL. Jan. 25, A.D. 661.

his will that Hasan, his eldest son, should succeed to the throne. Still true to the elective principle, Aly answered: 'I do not command this, neither do I forbid it. See ye to it.' Then he called Hasan and Hosein to his bedside, and counselled them to be steadfast in piety and resignation to the will of God, and to be kind to their younger brother, the son of his Hanifite wife. After that he wrote his testament, and continuing to repeat the name of the Lord to the end, so breathed his last. When they had performed the funeral obsequies, Hasan arraigned the assassin before him. Nothing daunted, Ibn Muljam said: 'I made a covenant with the Lord before the holy House at Mecca, that I would slay both Aly and Muâvia. Now, if thou wilt, I shall go forth and kill the other, or perish in the attempt. If I succeed, I will return and swear allegiance unto thee.' 'Nay,' said Hasan, 'not before thou hast tasted of the fire.' He was put to death, and the body, tied up in a sack, was committed to the flames.[1]

Ibn Muljam put to death.

Aly's burial-place unknown.

Tradition, strange to say, is silent, and opinion uncertain, as to where the body of Aly lies. Some believe that he was buried in the cathedral Mosque at Kûfa, others in the palace.[2] Certainly, his tomb was never, in early times, the object of any care or veneration. The same indifference attached to his memory throughout the realm of Islam, as had attached

[1] In modern times, some spiritual loss in the future state is popularly attributed to the burning of a criminal's body. Here, apparently, it was intended to be emblematical of the fire of hell to which Hasan consigned the murderer. In the case of Abu Bekr's son (p. 403), the additional indignity was added of the body being packed up in an ass's skin.

The offer to assassinate Muâvia is hardly consistent with the expectation which Ibn Muljam must have had that he had already perished at the hand of his brother conspirator. But I give the words as I find them.

[2] The popular tradition is that he was buried at Najaf, near to Kûfa, and on the shore of the 'Sea' of that name, where his supposed tomb is the object of popular veneration at the present day. Others assert (but on no sufficient ground) that Hasan had the body removed to Medîna. There is, in fact, no tradition of any authority on the subject. The uncertainty is significant. Aly never had any hold on the affections of the people. His grave must have been neglected, and even lost sight of, in the troubles succeeding his death. The oblivion as to his burial-place is in strange contrast with the almost Divine honours paid to him by so many sects in later days.

to his person during life, and it was not till that generation had passed away that the sentiment of reverence and regard for the husband of the Prophet's daughter, and father of his only surviving progeny, began to show itself.

His family.

Aly died about sixty years of age. His troubled and contested reign had lasted but four years and nine months. For a time (like Mahomet himself) he had been content with a single wife, the Prophet's daughter Fâtima, by whom he had three sons and two daughters, the progenitors of the Synd race—the nobility of Islam.[1] After she died, he took many women into his harem, both free and servile; by whom he had, in all, eleven sons and fifteen daughters. Aly was a tender-hearted father. In his old age, a little girl was born to him, with whose prattle he would beguile his troubles; for he had her always on his knee, and doted on her with a special love.[2]

Forbearance and magnanimity of Aly.

In the character of Aly there are many things to commend. Mild and beneficent, he treated the rebel city of Bussorah, when prostrate at his feet (as Mahomet had done the ungrateful city of his birth) with a generous forbearance. Towards the theocratic fanatics, who wearied his patience by incessant intrigue and insensate rebellion, he showed no vindictiveness. Excepting Muâvia (the man of all others whom he ought not to have estranged) he carried his policy of conciliation to a dangerous extreme. In compromise indeed, and in procrastination, lay the failure of his Caliphate. With greater vigour, spirit, and determination, he might have maintained the integrity of the empire and averted the schism which for a time threatened the existence of Islam, and is felt in its debilitating influences to the present day.

Procrastination and compromise, his failings.

[1] One of the sons died in infancy. The daughters were Zeinab and Omm Kolthûm; but he had, by other mothers, two other daughters whom he called by the same names, *i.e.* Zeinab the less, and Omm Kolthûm the less.

[2] The mother of this little girl belonged to the Beni Kilâb. The child lisped, pronouncing *l* like *sh*, and so was unable to say *Kilâb*; so when asked to what tribe she belonged, she would imitate the bark of a dog (kilâb or kalb meaning 'a dog'), to the great delight of Aly and his courtiers.

Aly wise in counsel.

Aly was wise in counsel, and many an adage and sapient proverb has been attributed to him. But, like Solomon, his wisdom was more for others than for himself. His career cannot be characterised otherwise than as a failure. On the election of Abu Bekr, influenced probably by Fâtima, who claimed and was denied a share in her father's property, Aly retired for a time into private life. Thereafter we find him taking part in the counsels of Abu Bekr and his successors, and even performing the functions of chief judicial officer. But he never asserted the leading position, which, as the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, might have been expected of him; nor is there aught (excepting party-coloured and distorted tradition) to show that this was due to any other cause than his own easy and inactive temperament. There is one indelible blot on the escutcheon of Aly —the flagrant breach of duty he was guilty of towards his sovereign ruler. He had sworn allegiance to Othmân, and by him he was bound to have stood in his last extremity. Instead, he held ignobly aloof, while the Caliph fell a victim to red-handed treason. Nor can the plea avail that he was himself in the hands of the insurgents. Had there been a loyal will to help, there would have been a ready way. In point of fact, his attitude gave colour to the charge even of collusion.[1] And herein Aly must be held accountable not only for a grave dereliction of duty, but for a fatal error, which shook the stability of the Caliphate itself, as he was not long in finding to his cost.

The blot upon his escutcheon.

Divine Imâmate, a late fiction.

There is no trace whatever, in the history of those times, of the extravagant claims made in later days for Aly and his family. Clearly none of these were regarded during their lifetime with any respect or veneration beyond that which was due to their relationship with the Prophet.[2] On the

[1] Such was the popular belief even at the Alyite court of Al Mâmun. See *The Apology of Al Kindy*, which faithfully represents the sentiments current at that day among the courtiers of Baghdad, p. 25.

[2] It might be thought that the teaching of Ibn Sauda in Egypt was the

contrary, we find that even in their own capital and provinces, there prevailed towards them an utter want of enthusiasm and loyalty, amounting at times to positive disaffection. The fiction of the Divine *Imâmship* was a reaction from the tragedy at Kerbala (to be told below) and the cruel fate of the Prophet's descendants. And the superstition, fostered by Alyite and Abbasside faction, soon formed a powerful lever which was skilfully and unscrupulously used in the busy canvass to overthrow the Omeyyad dynasty.

germ of the Divine Imâmate and Second Coming. But the traditions regarding that teaching are altogether vague and uncertain. Whatever it was, it certainly took no root; nor do we hear of it again for many years after, and then first away in the far East.

CHAPTER XLVI.

HASAN SUCCEEDS ALY.—ABDICATES IN FAVOUR OF MUAVIA.

A.H. XL., XLI. A.D. 661.

Hasan succeeds his father Aly. Ramadhân, A.H. XL. Jan. A.D. 661.

WHEN they had committed Aly, we know not where, to his last home, the people, following the example of Cays ibn Sád, whose influence at the Court of Baghdad continued undiminished, did homage, as it were by common consent, to Hasan, the departed Caliph's eldest son. But Hasan was a poor-spirited creature, more intent on varying the charms of his ever-changing harem than on the business of public life, and altogether unworthy of his descent as the grandson of the Prophet.[1]

But, attacked by Muâvia, and mobbed by his own troops,

It was, therefore, now Muâvia's opportunity for asserting his title to the whole Moslem empire. Already, in accordance with Amru's verdict at the Arbitration, he was recognised as Caliph throughout Syria and Egypt.[2] Resenting the succession of Hasan to his father's power at Kûfa, Muâvia at once gathered a powerful army and marched to invade Irâc. No sooner was this intelligence received, than the men of Kûfa,

[1] His vagrant passions gained for him the unenviable nickname of *The Divorcer*, for it was only by continual divorces that he could harmonise his craving for new nuptials with the requirements of the Divine law, which limited his lawful wives to four. He is said to have exercised the power of divorce, as a matter of simple caprice, seventy (according to others ninety) times. The leading men complained to Aly that his son was continually marrying their daughters, and continually divorcing them. Aly replied that the remedy lay in their own hands; they should refuse to give him their daughters to wife. These divorced wives were irrespective of his concubines or slave-girls, upon the number and variety of whom there was no limit or check whatever.

[2] There are some traditions, but untrustworthy, that Muâvia was now, for the first time, proclaimed Caliph at Jerusalem.

impatient at the prospect of falling under the rule of Syria, rallied beneath their new Caliph's standard, and an army forty thousand strong was ready to repel the attack.[1] But Hasan had no stomach for the war. Sending forward his vanguard of twelve thousand men under the brave and faithful Cays, he followed himself irresolutely; and, with the bulk of his army, rested at Medâin amidst the luxurious gardens of the old Persian Court.[2] While thus ignobly holding back, the report gained currency at Medâin that Cays had been defeated on the plains of Mesopotamia, and slain. An émeute ensued. The troops rose mutinously upon the Caliph. They rushed into his sumptuous pavilion, and plundered the royal tents even to the carpets. A project was set on foot to seize his person, and, by delivering him up to Muâvia, thus make favourable terms. The faint-hearted Caliph, alarmed at these demonstrations, took refuge in the Great White Palace, a more congenial residence for him than the martial camp; and, trusting no longer to his fickle and disloyal people, sent letters to Muâvia offering to submit. Hasan agreed to abdicate and retire to Medîna, on condition that he should retain the contents of the treasury, five million pieces; that he should receive for his support the revenues of a Persian district; and further, that the imprecation against his father should be dropped from the public prayers. Muâvia granted the first two requests; and as for the third, he consented that no prayer against Aly should be recited within hearing of his son. The truce was ratified accordingly on the 24th day of Rabî I.

abdicates in favour of Muâvia July, A.D. 661.

After a brief and inglorious reign of only five or six

[1] The traditions read as if the army had been previously kept up in readiness for an attack on Syria; but, as already shown, a truce at this time existed between Aly and Muâvia of indefinite duration, according to which hostilities had been laid aside.

[2] Aly had formerly taken the same route, viâ Medâin, when advancing upon Syria. Muâvia was no doubt marching now from Ricca or Tadmor, across the plain of Upper Mesopotamia, and the natural way of meeting him would, consequently, be up the Tigris from Medâin, and then striking off to the west.

months, Hasan, with his household and belongings, retired to the Hejâz. The people of Kûfa, we are told, wept at their departure. But Hasan left them without regret. It was a race, he said, in whom no trust could be reposed, and who had set purpose neither for good nor for evil.[1]

Cays submits to Muâvia.

Cays, whose ability and prowess were worthy of a better cause, remained for some little while longer in the field. But at length, having obtained terms for all his soldiers who had been fighting on the side of Aly, and there being no longer any master left to fight for, he laid down his arms and recognised Muâvia as supreme.[2]

[1] The received date of Hasan's resignation, as in the text, would make his reign last five and a half months. Others place it in Rabî II., and some even in Jumâd I., which would make the reign one or two months longer.

His offer to resign on specified terms was crossed by a messenger from Muâvia, with a blank sheet signed by Muâvia, who thus declared his readiness to concede any terms to Hasan if he abdicated. Thereupon Hasan doubled his claim; but Muâvia refused, saying that he had already specified his terms, and that they had been accepted. Darâbgird was the district of which Hasan was to receive the revenues; but the people of Bussorah claimed it as their own conquest, and would not give it up.

There is an Abbasside tradition, that one abused Hasan as he left Kûfa, saying that he had 'blackened the faces of the Moslems;' to which Hasan replied by quoting a dream in which Mahomet saw the descendants of Omeyya one after another ascending the steps of his pulpit; whereupon the Prophet was comforted by the revelation of Suras 97 and 108, regarding the Fountain of Al Cawthar and the Night of Power, which he is told are 'better than a thousand months,' that is, than the thousand months during which the Beni Omeyya would rule!

According to another tradition, Amru persuaded Muâvia to allow Hasan, after his own inaugural speech, to address the people. Hasan then began to speak of the wheel of fortune, and of the necessity of stopping the effusion of blood, and was going on to quote Sura xxi. v. 111, about the world being a trial, and the Lord helping the Prophet against his adversaries, when Muâvia made him sit down. He also told Amru he had made a mistake in proposing that Hasan should be allowed to speak.

[2] Amru, they say, wished Muâvia to fight Cays, but he answered that it would be only useless bloodshed, and so sent to Cays a clean sheet signed at foot, as he had done to Hasan, agreeing to any terms he might propose. Cays, upon receiving this, bade his soldiers choose whether they 'preferred to obey an illegitimate prince, or to go on fighting without any prince at all.' They preferred to give in, and so retired from the field.

We hear little more of Cays, who died before Muâvia. His sympathies had been all on the side of Aly; and if the correspondence that passed between Muâvia and him, when in Egypt, be genuine, he had little reason to trust Muâvia.

Thus, at last, Muâvia was able to make a triumphal entry into Kûfa. Having received the homage of that city and of the Eastern provinces, he returned to Syria sole and undisputed Caliph of Islam; and Damascus thenceforth became the capital of the empire.

Muâvia sole and undisputed Caliph.

The imprecations against the memory of Aly, his house, and his adherents, still formed part of the public service at Damascus. The curse, indeed, continued to be so used throughout the whole period of Omeyyad ascendency.[1]

Continued imprecation against the house of Aly.

[1] We are even told that the promise given by Muâvia to Hasan, namely that the sound of the curse should not fall upon his ears, was not kept.

It is said that Omar II. (A.H. 100) dropped the imprecation; but he was a poor pietist, whose religious scruples led him to make many weak concessions, and even to recognise the claims of the house of Aly. He is of course popular with the Abbassides, who magnify him as a saint of blessed memory, and have invented many wonderful stories to his credit. Weil thinks that this may be one of them; and, at any rate, if suspended during his reign, the curse was resumed immediately on his decease.

CHAPTER XLVII.

SOME BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

A.H. XL.–L.

Biographical notices.

BEFORE passing on to the brief remainder of this work, I purpose to notice shortly the sequel of one or two of the leading men still left at Aly's death upon the stage.

Hasan, son of Aly, poisoned by his wife.

Hasan, the short-lived Caliph, retired to Medîna, where, with ample means to gratify his ruling passion, he lived in ease and quietness, giving no further anxiety to Muâvia. He survived eight years, and met his death by poison at the hand of one of his wives. It was a not unnatural end for 'Hasan the Divorcer;' but Alyite tradition would have us to believe that the lady was bribed by the Caliph to commit the crime, and thus exalt the libertine to the dignity of a martyr.[1] Of his brother Hosein, we shall hear more anon.

Amru.

Amru remained in the government of Egypt till his death, A.H. 43. He died seventy-three years of age, and penitent, we are told, for all his misdeeds. His life was one of the most eventful in this history. No man influenced more than he the fortunes of the Caliphate. Brave in the field, astute in counsel, coarse and unscrupulous in word

[1] The culprit was a noble Arab lady, the daughter of Ashâth, Chief of the Beni Kinda. The tradition, that she was bribed by Muâvia, is altogether unlikely, and is no doubt a fiction of the prevailing character. Hasan was, politically, a harmless creature; and Muâvia had no motive whatever, after his abdication and retirement into private life (so far as our materials go), for the crime. The jealousies of Hasan's ever-changing harem afford a far likelier reason.

and action, it was mainly to Amru that Muâvia owed his ascendency over Aly, and the eventual establishment of the Omeyyad dynasty. He was four years Governor of Egypt under Omar; he continued in the same post a like period under Othmân, who by his recall in an evil hour made him his enemy; and, finally reappointed by Muâvia on the defeat of Mohammed son of Abu Bekr, he was still at his death the Governor of Egypt. One of his sons succeeded him, but not for any lengthened period.[1]

Moghîra appointed Governor of Kûfa.

The vicissitudes in the career of Moghîra were hardly less surprising than in that of Amru. Clever and designing, he survived the disgrace of his fall at Bussorah, and rose again to influence at court. He was eventually placed by Muâvia in the most difficult and coveted post of the empire, the government, namely, of the no longer regal Kûfa, to which was added the northern district of Persia. By his shrewd and firm administration, he held under strict control that fickle and restless city, still betrayed ever and anon into theocratic outbursts, or (the new trouble of the empire) into treasonable demonstrations in favour of the race of Aly.

Ziâd, Governor of Southern Persia, gives in his adhesion to Muâvia. A.H. XLII. A.D. 662.

But, perhaps, the service of greatest value which Moghîra rendered to his sovereign, was that he induced Ziâd, now holding powerful command in the south of Persia, to tender his allegiance. The son of a vagrant bond-woman, whom Abu Sofiân before his conversion chanced to meet at Tâyif, Ziâd had overcome, by the faithful and diligent application of his high abilities, the disadvantage of servile birth. His merits as Chancellor of the Treasury at Bussorah had been recognised by Omar, and he had risen both under Othmân and Aly to the most important commands in Bussorah and Southern Persia. Eloquent in address, and powerful in administration,

[1] Amru is, as a matter of course, unpopular with the Abbasside historians, who make the most of his undoubted unscrupulousness and levity both in word and action. His last words are said to have been the humble confession that his life had been one of rebellion against the Lord, and an earnest praye for pardon.

he was by far the ablest statesman of the day. Firmly attached to the cause of Aly, he retained his animosity towards Muâvia, even after Hasan's abdication; and as Governor of Istakhr (Persepolis) was a thorn in the side of the Caliphate. Moghîra, who had not forgotten that he owed his escape from the capital charge of adultery to the partial evidence of Ziâd,[1] maintained friendly relations with him, and in the forty-second year of the Hegira was deputed by Muâvia to the magnificent viceregal court of Istakhr, and there persuaded him to tender his submission. Under a safe-conduct, he appeared before the Caliph at Damascus, and presented, in token of his adhesion, a purse of a thousand golden pieces. He was dismissed with every token of honour, and confirmed in his Persian government.

Muâvia declares Ziâd, as son of Abu Sofiân, his brother. A.H. XLV.

Not long afterwards a curious episode in his history disturbed the equanimity of the Moslem public. Muâvia formally recognised Ziâd as the son of his own father Abu Sofiân, and therefore as his brother. The open acknowledgment of the relationship created a serious scandal throughout Islam, because it was held to contravene the law of legitimacy, and still more because it made Omm Habîba, one of the 'Mothers of the Faithful,' and daughter also of Abu Sofiân, to be the sister of an adulterous issue. Even the Beni Omeyyad, Muâvia's own kinsfolk, were displeased at the affront put upon the purity of their blood. But the feeling passed away when it was seen that a pillar of iron strength had been gained to the Omeyyad side.[2] In the

[1] See above, p. 264.

[2] The subject was much canvassed by all parties. Prior to Islam, the law of marriage and legitimacy was lax; and a loose woman might, as in the present case, ascribe the paternity of her child to anyone prepared to admit the same; and (adds Ibn al Athîr) had Muâvia taken up this ground, there could have been no valid objection to it. But he did more; he proceeded to take the evidence of the owner of the slave-girl, as if the case had been one of Mahometan law, under which the paternity would not have been admitted, and the case, in fact, would have been held to be one of whoredom, demanding the punishment of both parties. Tradition varies as to whether Abu Sofiân himself ever acknowledged the paternity.

year 45 A.H., Ziâd was made Governor of Bussorah, and of the whole of Southern Persia, from the Straits of Omân to the river Indus. His strong hand fell heavily on the restless population of Bussorah: the city was patrolled incessantly by an armed police of a thousand men. None might venture abroad at night on pain of death; and so ruthless was the order, that an unlucky Arab, who had wandered unawares into the precincts of the town, was tried and deliberately executed for the involuntary offence. Both at the Mosque and the palace, and whenever he went abroad, Ziâd was attended in Oriental guise by silver-sticks and lictors, and a body-guard of five hundred soldiers waited at his gate. The supremacy of law, or, as it might perhaps be called, the reign of terror, was new at Bussorah, but it effectually repressed rebellion; and the same may also be said of Kûfa, to which, on Moghîra's death, Ziâd was translated. This stern administration was but a foretaste of the hard and cruel régime which, later on, found its climax in the bloody rule of Hajjâj the son of Yusûf.

Ziâd appointed Governor of Bussorah, and eventually of Kûfa.

In the fiftieth year of the Hegira, we are told that Muâvia entertained a project for removing the pulpit and staff of the Prophet from Medîna, the rebellious scene of Othmân's murder, to Damascus, now the capital of Islam. But the impious project was, by Divine interposition, checked. For, 'on its being touched, the pulpit trembled fearfully, and

Design of removing Mahomet's pulpit to Damascus.

After Muâvia had recognised him as his brother, Ziâd proposed to go on pilgrimage to Mecca and Medîna. His brother, Abu Bakra (who, offended at his tergiversation in the adulterous charge against Moghîra, had never spoken to him since) sent a message to dissuade him. 'Thou wilt meet Omm Habîba,' he said, 'if thou wilt go on pilgrimage. Now, if she receive thee as her brother, that will be regarded as a slight upon the memory of the Prophet; if otherwise, it will be a slight upon thyself.' So Ziâd thought better of it, and gave up the design.

Again, Ziâd, wishing to extract an acknowledgment of his birth from Ayesha, addressed a letter to her in which he subscribed himself, *Ziâd son of Abu Sofiân*; to which she replied, without committing herself, merely thus, 'To my dear son, Ziâd.' On the same ground, Abbasside writers ordinarily name him without a patronymic, as, *Ziâd ibn Abîhi*, i.e. 'Ziâd, son of his *father*.' He is also called after his *mother*, 'Ziâd ibn Sommeyya.'

the sun was darkened, so that the very stars shone forth, and men were terrified at the prodigies.' The tradition is significant of the superstitious regard in which everything connected with the Prophet's person was held. It is not unlikely that Muâvia did entertain the sacrilegious design; but, if so, he was dissuaded from it by Abu Horeira, who urged that where the Prophet had placed his pulpit and his staff, there they should remain. And so they were left as relics in the Great Mosque hard by the dwelling-place of Mahomet.[1]

[1] We are told that the same attempt, followed by similar prodigies, was made by the Caliph Abd al Malik, and also by Welîd, &c.; in fact, it was an impious act, of a kind which Abbasside tradition is rather fond of attributing to the Omeyyad Caliphs. We are told that Mahomet, anticipating the sacrilege, is said to have threatened hell-fire against any who would venture to remove the pulpit. This Abu Horeira, who came to Medîna, A.H. 7, and from whom we have so many traditions, died in A.H. 57 or 59.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

YEZID APPOINTED HEIR APPARENT.—HEREDITARY NOMINATION BECOMES A PRECEDENT.

A.H. LVI. A.D. 676.

Precedents for nomination or election to the Caliphate.

THE election of a Caliph on each recurring succession, excepting only that of Omar, had been followed by the risk of serious perils to the peace of Islam. The choice was supposed to be a privilege vested in the inhabitants of Medîna—'Citizens,' as well as 'Refugees;' but the practice had been various, and the rule had been oftener broken than observed. The Prophet himself nominated no one. Abu Bekr may be said to have been chosen by acclamation.[1] Abu Bekr, on his death-bed, named Omar his successor. And Omar, establishing yet another precedent, placed the nomination in the hands of Electors. It is true that on the two last-named occasions, the choice was ratified by the homage of Medîna; but that was little more than the formal recognition of an appointment already made. At the fourth succession, the election of Aly, though carried out under the compulsion of insurgent bands, resembled somewhat the popular election of the first Caliph. Then followed the unsuccessful rebellion of Talha and Zobeir, based on the allegation that homage had been extorted from them under pressure. After that, ensued the struggle between Muâvia, the *de facto* sovereign of Syria, and Aly, which ended in the irregular recognition of Muâvia as Caliph upon the so-called Arbitration of Dûma, and in the double Caliphate. On

[1] Sâd (the father of Cays) was the only recusant.

the death of Aly, who (we are told) declined to nominate a successor, his son Hasan was elected, not, as heretofore, by the people of Medîna, but by the citizens of Kûfa. And, finally, we have the first example of abdication, when Hasan resigned his rights into the hands of Muâvia, and left him sole Caliph of Islam.

The initiative in election no longer at Medîna.

Whatever the rights of Medîna originally may have been, circumstances had now materially altered the only practical means of exercising them. Having been abandoned as the seat of government, the privilege of choosing a Caliph, or of confirming his nomination, however much it may have vested by prescription in the citizens of Medîna, had become an anachronism now. The succession, as in the case of Hasan, followed necessarily, and at once, upon the death of the reigning Caliph, and Medîna could only ratify what had taken place elsewhere. The functions of the citizens of Medîna were thus, from the course of events, transferred to the inhabitants of the seat of government, wheresoever it might be.

Danger surrounding each succession.

Again, that which had happened after the election of Aly, might happen again at any fresh accession to the throne. Zobeir and Talha raised the standard of revolt on the plea that their oath was taken under compulsion; while between Aly and Muâvia, there followed a long and doubtful contest. The internecine struggle had imperilled the existence of Islam. Not only had the ranks of the Faithful been seriously thinned by the blood shed on either side; but, from without, enemies might at any moment have taken advantage of the strife. Muâvia, in point of fact, made a truce with the Byzantine Court while the civil war impended. But if a similar opportunity again offered, the foes of Islam might not be so forbearing, and a fatal wound might be inflicted thus upon the empire torn by intestine conflict.

Influenced by such considerations, as well, no doubt, as by the desire of maintaining the Caliphate in his own line, Muâvia entertained the project of declaring his son, Yezîd,

to be the Heir Apparent. By securing thus an oath of fealty to his son throughout the Moslem world, he would anticipate the event of his own decease, and thus prevent the peril of a contested election when it did occur. Ziâd, summoned to advise, was favourable to the design, but enjoined deliberation, and a preliminary cautious canvass throughout the provinces. He also counselled Yezîd, who was devoted to the chase and careless of public affairs, to amend his ways in preparation for the throne, and show before the people a character more fitted for the high dignity in store for him. Moghîra likewise was strongly in favour of the scheme.[1] But it was not till both these counsellors had passed away, that Muâvia found himself in a position to proceed with the design.

Muâvia's design to nominate his son Heir Apparent.

So soon as Muâvia felt secure of adequate support, and especially that Medîna would not resent the invasion of its elective privilege,[2] provision was made that deputations from all the provinces, and also from the chief cities, should present themselves before the Caliph at Damascus. These, received in state, affected to press the nomination; and accordingly, without further ceremony, the oath of allegiance was taken by all present to Yezîd as next successor to the Caliphate.

Yezîd declared Heir Apparent. A.H. LVI. A.D. 676.

[1] The project, indeed, has been attributed entirely to Moghîra. The tradition runs thus: Moghîra was afraid that Muâvia intended to supersede him as Governor of Kûfa by the promotion of Ziâd to the post; and so, by suggesting the nomination of Yezîd, and promising to gain over the city of Kûfa to it, he hoped to secure his continued hold of the city, as being necessary to the success of the scheme. But the tradition bears strong marks of coming through an Abbasside medium.

[2] When Merwân, governor of the city, placed the matter before the men of Medîna, he was at first violently opposed. Amongst others, Abd al Rahmân, son of Abu Bekr, said, 'This thing is naught but a fraud and a deception. In place of the election, the right to which vesteth in this city, ye will now make the succession like unto that of the Greeks and Romans—where one Heraclius succeedeth another Heraclius.' On this, Muâvia quoted from the Corân: 'Say not unto your parents, *Fie on you!* neither reproach them' (*Sura* xvii. 24); signifying, it may be, that the very practice of nomination, now opposed, had been introduced by Abu Bekr himself in appointing Omar.

Abdallah son of Omar is said to have been gained over by the gift of ten thousand golden pieces.

Syria and Irâc, having without demur tendered their homage to the same effect, Muâvia set out for the Hejâz, followed by a retinue of a thousand horse, ostensibly to perform the Lesser Pilgrimage, but in reality to obtain the assent of the Holy Cities to what had been enacted at Damascus and elsewhere. The leading dissentients at Medîna were Hosein the second son of Aly, the son of Zobeir, Abd al Rahmân son of Abu Bekr, and the son of Omar. Muâvia received them roughly as they came out to meet him on his entry into the city; and so, to avoid further mortification, they departed at once for Mecca. The remainder of the citizens ratified the nomination of Yezîd, and took the oath accordingly. Continuing his progress, and having arrived at Mecca, Muâvia carried himself blandly towards the people of the Holy City during the first few days of his visit, which were occupied with the rites of pilgrimage. But as the time of departure drew nigh, he stood up to address them on his errand; and although his speech was gilded with many plausible assurances that the privileges of the Sacred places would be religiously respected, there was at the first no response. Then arose Abdallah son of Zobeir, and boldly said that the oath of homage to an Heir Apparent would be opposed to all the precedents of Islam. To such cavils, the Caliph, in answer, urged the danger in which Islam was continually placed from the risk of a contested succession followed by renewed bloodshed. The various objections then raised may thus be summarised: 'We shall consent,' the spokesmen said, 'to any one of these three things. *First*, do as the Prophet did, and leave the election absolutely to the citizens of Medîna. Or, *secondly*, do as Abu Bekr did, and nominate a successor from amongst the Coreish.[1] Or, *thirdly*, like Omar, appoint Electors who shall, from amongst the

Mecca and Medîna forced to swear allegiance.

[1] That the Caliph should be a Coreishite was a condition generally admitted, excepting by the Khârejites, who opposed the exclusive pretensions of the Coreish, and, supposing there were a Caliph (for the stricter would have had only a Council of State), were indifferent from what stock he came.

same, choose a candidate to succeed thee. Only, like Abu Bekr and Omar, thou must exclude thine own sons and thy Father's sons.' 'As for the first course,' replied the Caliph, 'there is no one now left like unto Abu Bekr, that the people might choose him. As for the rest, verily I fear the contentions and war that would ensue were not the succession fixed aforehand.' Then, finding all his arguments wasted in the air, he called out the body-guard, and at the point of the sword caused all the city to take the oath.

Muâvia's action becomes precedent for future successions;

The example of Syria, Irâc, and the Holy Cities, was followed by the whole empire without reserve. And ever after, the precedent of Muâvia more or less prevailed; that is to say, succession to the Caliphate was based partly on descent, partly on the choice of the reigning Caliph, his nomination being confirmed by an oath of fealty taken first by the inhabitants at the seat of government, and then generally throughout the empire. The last condition, representing the fiction that the elective power was vested in the body of the Faithful, became almost nominal, and the oath of allegiance was consequently enforced by force of arms against recusants. The practice thus was for the Commander of the Faithful to proclaim as his successor the fittest, the noblest born, or the most favoured, of his sons, or (in default of immediate issue) the best qualified amongst his kinsmen. To him, as Heir Apparent, a provisional and anticipatory oath of fealty was taken during his father's lifetime; and the succession, as a rule, was guided by that choice. Sometimes even two successions were thus anticipated, the reigning prince making a double nomination; but such attempt to forestall the distant future was calculated to breed, rather than prevent, dissension.[1]

[1] Yezîd was the only fit son Muâvia had. He was also born of a noble mother belonging to the Beni Kalb, who amid the luxuries of the court pined for the freedom of nomad life. Another son was decrepid; and a third the son of a slave-girl. By the letter of the Mahometan law, the son of the bondwoman is equally legitimate with the son of the free. But amongst the Arabs,

even among Abbassides.

The practice thus begun by the Omeyyads, was followed equally by the Abbassides; and proved a precedent even for later times.

the son of a noble mother took precedence over the lower born; and so noble birth became naturally one of the elements of fitness in the choice. And the same we see to the present day, even in such petty principalities as that of Afghanistan.

The history of Yezîd's mother has attractions for the Arab writers. She gave vent to her longing for a return to desert life in verse, which coming to Muâvia's ears, he dismissed her with her son to live in the encampment of her tribe; and there Yezîd acquired the tastes of the Bedouins, and his love for the chase and a free life, which he ever after retained. His mother's verses were such as these:

A tent fanned by the desert breeze is dearer far to me than the lofty palace.
I should ride more joyously on the young camel than on the richly caparisoned steed.
The whistling of the gale across the sandy plain is sweeter to me than the flourish of royal trumpets.
A crust of bread in the corner of a Bedouin tent has a better relish to me than that of choicest viands.
The noble Arab of my tribe is more comely in my sight than the obese and bearded men around me.
O that I were once again in my desert home! I would not exchange it for the most gorgeous hall.

CHAPTER XLIX.

YEZID AND THE TRAGEDY AT KERBALA.

A.H. LXI. A.D. 680.

Death of Muâvia. Rajab, A.H. LX. April, A.D. 680.

AFTER a reign of unusual length and prosperity, Muâvia came to die at nearly eighty years of age. As he felt the end approaching, he brought forth a casket with parings in it of the Prophet's nails. Of these ground fine, he bade them sprinkle the powder in his eyes and mouth when dead; and then bury him, for a winding-sheet, in a garment which Mahomet gave him. Fortune had favoured his rule. For twenty years he was Governor of Syria, and nearly as many more the acknowledged Caliph of all Islam. Since the abdication of Hasan, there had been, for the most part, profound peace throughout the empire. Wise, courageous, and forbearing, he held the dangerous and discordant elements that surrounded him in check;[1] consolidated, and even extended, the already vast area of Islam; and nursed commerce and the arts of peace, so that they greatly flourished in his time.

His dying advice to Yezîd.

But he looked to the future with anxiety. The experiment of nominating Yezîd his successor was sure to meet with opposition when he was gone. So from his death-bed he sent a message to Yezîd, who was absent at his hunting-

[1] His courage, however, was more moral than physical. Both he and Aly, by luxurious living, had become obese (at Kûfa, Aly went by the nickname of 'the pot-bellied'), so that in their later years there was little room, in respect of either, for active bodily exertion. Still, even as late as the field of Siffin, we have seen that Aly fought with his early gallantry; while Muâvia (if the tradition be true) shrank from a personal encounter with him. Aly was, without doubt, the braver of the two in physical courage; but Muâvia, beyond comparison, the abler and bolder ruler.

quarters, warning him of those against whom he must be on his guard. There were only four, he said, of whom, as former recusants, he need specially beware; Abdallah son of Omar, Hosein son of Aly, Abdallah son of Zobeir, and Abd al Rahmân son of Abu Bekr. The first, a pious devotee, would surely succumb. The last might be persuaded by his fellows to set up his claim; but he was too much engrossed with the pleasures of the harem to be the cause of much anxiety.[1] 'As for Hosein,' he continued, 'the factious people of Irâc will not leave him alone till he shall attempt the empire; when thou hast gotten the victory, then deal gently with him, for verily the Prophet's blood runneth in his veins. It is the Son of Zobeir that I fear the most for thee. Fierce as the lion, and crafty as the fox;—when within thy grasp, destroy him root and branch, leaving not a vestige behind.'

Hosein and the Son of Zobeir escape to Mecca.

The first care of Yezîd on ascending the throne was to require the recusants who had objected to his nomination as Heir Apparent, to swear allegiance to him now as Caliph. These resided at Medîna, and on the summons of the governor, two of them, the sons of Omar and Abbâs (the latter, progenitor of the Abbassides), at once complied with the command. But Abdallah son of Zobeir, and Hosein son of Aly, hesitated; and, under cover of delay for considering the matter, both of them escaped to Mecca.

Ibn Zobeir dissembles.

Since its capture by Mahomet, fifty years before, no enemy had dared to go up against the Holy City; and there, in like security with the doves fluttering around the temple, whom no man might molest, conspirators, abusing the privilege of asylum, were able to hatch their plots against the empire. The ambition of Abdallah ibn Zobeir, as Muâvia foresaw, aimed at the Caliphate; but so long as Hosein remained at Mecca, he dissembled his intentions, and professed to yield to the superior claims of the Prophet's grandson.

The house of Aly was still, after a fashion, popular at

[1] Some, again, think that Abd al Rahmân died before this.

Kûfa. The fond and fickle populace of that factious city now turned their eyes in the direction of Aly's second son, Hosein. Invitations began to pour in upon him from thence, with promises of support, if he would but appear at Kûfa and claim his regal rights. Within a short space after reaching Mecca, he received one hundred and fifty missives of the kind. His friends pointed faithfully to the slippery ways of the men of Kûfa, and earnestly besought him that he would not trust himself amongst them there. But Ibn Zobeir, longing to be rid of his rival, fostered the ambitious design. The unfortunate prince in an evil hour was thus tempted to accept the call. He sent, however, his cousin Muslim first, to feel the way, and promote his cause in Kûfa. Yezîd, hearing of the plot, deputed Obeidallah son of Ziâd, his most capable lieutenant, from Bussorah, to take the command at Kûfa. Muslim was discovered, soon after his arrival, lurking in the house of Hâni, a friend to the lineage of Aly. The populace, taking an unexpected turn in his favour, rose upon Obeidallah, and besieging him in his castle, went near to turning the tables against him. The ebullition, however, subsided almost as quickly as it arose. Obeidallah regained the lead, and Muslim, with his protector Hâni, was put to death.[1]

Hosein invited to Kûfa.

Muslim, sent in advance, put to death at Kûfa

Meanwhile, Hosein, heedless of the remonstrances of Ibn Abbâs and other faithful friends, started from Mecca, with his whole family and household, escorted by a small but devoted band of his adherents. He had already passed the great desert, and was well advanced on the road to Kûfa, when tidings reached him of the fate of Muslim and Hâni. He was staggered by the intelligence. It might well have seemed the height of madness, encumbered as he was with the ladies of his household, to venture himself into a hostile city; and it was yet possible for him to have retraced his steps. But the

Hosein sets out for Kûfa. Dzul Hijj, A.H. LX. Sept. A.D. 680.

[1] Muslim was son of Ackîl (brother of Aly) and grandson of Abu Tâlib, Mahomet's uncle. All the actors in this melancholy chapter have become household names in the mouths of Moslems, especially the Shîyites.

brothers of Muslim were clamorous with him to avenge his blood; and there was still the hope, a forlorn hope indeed, that the numerous professing friends who had drawn Hosein thither by specious promises, would, when he appeared in person, arise and rally round him, as, before the Battle of the Camel, they had rallied round his brother Hasan. But each messenger and traveller whom they met brought worse and worse reports. Farazdac, the poet, passed by; all the comfort he could give Hosein was—'The heart of Kûfa is with thee, but its sword against thee.' The Arab tribes, ever ready for a fray, had been swelling Hosein's band by the way, till it had become a considerable force; but now perceiving how matters stood, and that the cause was hopeless, they drew off, so that he was left with nothing besides his original small following of some thirty horse and forty foot.[1] An Arab chieftain of the Beni Tay besought him even now to divert his course south-west, towards the hills of Aja and Selma—'where,' said he, 'in ten days' time, twenty thousand swords and lances of my tribe will gather round thee.' Hosein would gladly have followed the advice; 'but,' he replied, 'I am surrounded, as thou seest, by women and children; I cannot turn aside with them into the desert; I must needs go forward.' They had not proceeded far, when a body of Kûfan horse appeared in sight. They were under the command of Horr, an Arab leader of the Beni Temîm, who courteously, but firmly, refused to let him pass. 'My orders,' he said, 'are to carry thee to Obeidallah, the son of Ziâd; but if thou wilt not go with me, then turn to the right hand, or turn to the left, as thou choosest, saving only the way back again to Mecca or Medîna, for that thou mayest not take.'[2] So the little band

Is met by Horr near Kûfa. 1 Moharram, A.H. LXI. Oct. A.D. 680.

[1] The number varies in different traditions; but no account gives it at more than forty horse and one hundred foot. Seventy heads were brought into Kûfa, including probably all the combatants. There were, no doubt, others, non-combatants, camp-followers, &c.

[2] Horr (we are to believe), during these parleys, was converted to the cause of Hosein, and eventually going over to him, fell fighting by his side.

turned aside to the left; and, skirting Kûfa on the margin of the desert, marched forward, for a day or two, along the banks of the Western Euphrates. In taking this direction, Hosein had apparently no immediate object beyond avoiding an attack from Kûfa. Horr kept close by him, and courteous communications still passed between them.

Hosein stopped by Amr's cavalry at Kerbala.

But it was dangerous to leave a pretender to the Caliphate thus hovering around such a city as Kûfa, already excited by the affair of Muslim. So Obeidallah sent Amr son of Sâd at the head of four thousand horse with a second summons.[1] Thus arrested, Hosein encamped his little band on the plain of Kerbala, close by the western branch of the Euphrates, five-and-twenty miles north-west of Kûfa. At repeated interviews, Hosein disclaimed hostilities; which, indeed, with his slender following, and no prospect of a rising in the city, were out of thought. He would submit, he said, but only on one of these conditions: 'Suffer me to return to the place from whence I came; if not, then lead me to Yezîd, the Caliph, at Damascus, and place my hand in his that I may speak with him face to face; or, if thou wilt do neither of these things, send me far away to the wars, where I shall fight, the Caliph's faithful soldier, against the enemies of Islam.' But Obeidallah insisted upon an unconditional submission; and to effect this without resort to arms, he ordered Amr to cut off all access to the river, hoping that thirst might thus force him to surrender. Hosein, who feared

But the whole of the sad tale becomes at this point so intensified and overlaid with Alyite fiction, that it is impossible to believe a hundredth part of what is related, and which the heated imaginations of the Shîyites have invented.

All the names we meet with here are ranged, either on one side or on the other (especially in the Shîyite vocabulary), as models either of piety or apostasy.

[1] Amr son of Sâd the hero of Câdesîya, they tell us, had just been nominated by Obeidallah to the government of Roi in Persia; and now Obeidallah made it a condition of investiture that he should bring in Hosein, dead or alive. The scene is painted theatrically of Amr wavering between duty to the grandson of the Prophet, and the bribe of office. He yielded to the latter, and for Mammon sold his soul. But all this must be taken *cum grano*.

worse than death the cruel name of Obeidallah son of Ziâd, stood firm to his conditions; and he even prevailed on Amr himself to press them upon Obeidallah, and beg that he might be sent to the Caliph's court. It had been well for the Omeyyad dynasty, if the request had been complied with. Instead, Obeidallah, impatient at the delay, jealous of his own prestige, or fearing the fickleness of the Kûfans, sent a creature of his own, an Arab called Shamir [1] (name never uttered by good Moslem but with a shudder and a curse) with orders that Amr should dally with Hosein no longer, but, dead or alive, bring him into Kûfa; and with power to supersede Amr in command should he fail in prompt obedience. Amr thus compelled, or fearing to lose the government of Rei to which he had just been promoted, forthwith surrounded the little camp more closely. Hosein, securing now the position as best he could, declared that he would not surrender, but would fight the battle to the last. The scene which followed is still fresh as yesterday in the mind of every Believer, and is commemorated with wild grief and frenzy as often as the fatal day, the Tenth of the first month of the year, comes round. It has been encircled by tradition with such harrowing recitals as never fail to rouse the horror and indignation of the listener to the highest pitch. The fond and pious Moslem forgets that Hosein, the leader of the band, having broken his allegiance, and yielded himself to a treasonable, though impotent, design upon the throne, was committing an offence that endangered society, and demanded swift suppression. He can see but the cruel and ruthless hand that

Shamir sent to bring in Hosein, dead or alive. 8 Moharram. Oct. 8.

[1] *Shamir* ibn Dzu al Joshan, the Dhihâbite, is a name never pronounced by the pious Moslem but with ejaculatory curse. Obeidallah (so the story goes) was at first inclined to concede the prayer of Hosein, as urged by Amr, for a safe-conduct to the Caliph at Damascus, when Shamir stepped forward, and said that Obeidallah, for the credit of his own name, must insist on the Pretender's surrender at discretion. So he obtained from Obeidallah a letter to Amr, threatening that if he failed to bring Hosein in, Shamir should take the command, and also obtain the government of Rei in his stead. The name is variously pronounced as Shamir or Shimar, Shomar or Shimr.

exterminated, with few exceptions, everyone in whose veins flowed the sacred blood of the Prophet. And, in truth, the simple story needs no adventitious colouring to touch the heart.

Hosein's preparations for defence. 9 Moharram. Oct. 9.

Hosein obtained a day's respite to send away his relatives from the fated camp. But, one and all, they refused to listen to his entreaty that they would leave him. During the night, his sister Zeinab overheard what was going forward, for his servant was furbishing her brother's sword, and singing the while snatches of martial verse on the impending combat. Hastily drawing her mantle around her, she stole in the dark to her brother's tent, and flinging herself upon him in wild grief, beat her breast and face, and fell into a swoon. Hosein poured water on her temples; but it was little that he could do to comfort her. The tents were rudely staked together, and some petty barricades of wood and reeds—the burning of which might briefly check the onset—piled around; a poor defence against the overwhelming foe. Aly, Hosein's little son, lay sick of a fever, but there was no drop of water to slake his parched lips. The women and children passed the night in fear and crying.

Hosein attacked, and, with all his company, slain. 10 Moharram, A.H. LXI. Oct. 10, A.D. 680.

On the morning of the fatal tenth of Moharram, Hosein drew out his little band for battle. There was a parley; and again he offered to retire, or be led to the presence of the Caliph. Finding that it was all in vain, he alighted from his camel; and, surrounded by his kinsmen, who stood with firm front for his defence, resolved to sell life dear. At length, one shot an arrow from the Kûfic side, and, amid the wailing of the women and little ones, the unequal fight began. Arrows flew thick, and the forlorn company had its numbers gradually thinned. Hosein's nephew, Câsim by name, a lad of about ten years of age, betrothed to his daughter Fâtima, was early struck by an arrow, and died in the arms of his uncle. One after another, the grown-up sons of Hosein, his brothers, nephews, and cousins, fell before the shafts of the enemy.

Some fled for shelter behind the camp. The reeds were set on fire, and the flames, spreading to the tents, added new horror to the scene. For long, none dared to attack Hosein, and to the last it was hoped that he might yet surrender. Towards the close of the conflict, driven by thirst, he sought to gain the river-bank. The troops closed in behind, and he was cut off from his family. The 'cursed' Shamir then led the attack. Struck by an arrow, Hosein fell to the ground, and the Kûfic cavalry rode ruthlessly across the corpse.

Trunkless heads cast before the Governor of Kûfa.

Not one of the fighting men of this forlorn band escaped alive. But they fought bravely; and left of their foes, more than their own number dead upon the field. Two sons of Hosein, Aly Akbar[1] and Abdallah, perished early in the day; and, at its close, there were amongst the dead no less than six brothers of Hosein, the sons of Aly; two nephews, sons of his brother Hasan; and six others, descendants of Abu Tâlib, the father of Aly and uncle of Mahomet.[2] The camp was plundered; but no further indignity was offered to the inmates, mostly women and children, who were carried, together with the ghastly load of seventy trunkless heads, to Obeidallah's palace. A shock of horror, such as never since has ceased to thrill the Moslem world, seized the crowd, when the gory head of the Prophet's grandson was cast at Obeidallah's feet. Hard hearts were melted. As the governor turned the head roughly over with his staff (though we must be slow to accept the tales of heartless insult multiplied by Shîya hate), an aged voice from amongst the courtiers was heard to cry: 'Gently! for it is the Prophet's grandson. By the Lord! I have seen these very lips kissed by the blessed mouth of Mahomet.'[3]

[1] Aly Akbar, that is *Aly the elder*, as his brother was called Aly Asghar, *Aly the younger*.

[2] There were either six or seven of Abu Tâlib's descendants. There was moreover a foster-brother of Hosein, and also a freedman of his.

[3] The tradition goes on to say that Obeidallah was wroth with this aged spokesman, called him a drivelling dotard, and said that if he had not been

The sister of Hosein, his two little sons, Aly Asghar[1] and Amr, and two daughters, sole survivors of the family, were treated by Obeidallah with respect; and were sent along with the head of the Pretender to the Caliph at Damascus. Whether sincerely, or to escape the execrations which began already to be heaped upon the actors in the tragedy, Yezîd disowned all responsibility for the death of Hosein, and bitterly reproached Obeidallah for the deed. The ladies and children were honourably received into the Caliph's household, and sent eventually, with every comfort and consideration, back to their Medîna home. This destination, meant in kindness by Yezîd, turned out badly for the Omeyyad Caliphate. At Medîna, there ensued a wild scene of grief and lamentation. Everything tended there to intensify the sense of the catastrophe. The deserted dwellings inhabited heretofore by the family and kinsmen of the Prophet, the widowed ladies, the orphaned little ones, all added pathos to the cruel tale. That tale, eagerly heard by groups of weeping listeners at the lips of the women and children who alone survived to tell it—and coloured, as oft repeated by them, with fresh and growing horrors—was spread by the pilgrims flocking yearly to Medîna, over the whole empire. The tragic story was taken up in every household. It soon was seen that the Governor of Kûfa, in his zeal to suppress the imperial claim of the house of Aly, had overshot the mark. The claim of this line, heretofore unknown, or treated with indifference, struck deep now into the hearts of multitudes; and a cloud of indignation and wrath began to gather, which ere long burst upon the dynasty accused of perpetrating the sacrilegious massacre. The tragedy of

The ladies and children sent to Medîna.

Reaction in favour of Aly's descendants.

such, he would have beheaded him upon the spot. But much is manifestly here invented, and everything coloured for effect. Some represent the incident as occurring at the Court at Damascus, and ascribe the speech to Yezîd. Weil holds falsely so, and I agree with him.

[1] Aly the less is also called *Zein al Abidîn*, 'Ornament of the Pious.'

Kerbala decided not only the fate of the Caliphate, but of Mahometan kingdoms long after the Caliphate had waned and disappeared. None who has witnessed the wild and passionate grief with which, as the anniversary each year comes round, Moslems of every land beat their breasts, in vast crowds, the live-long night, vociferating unweariedly the frantic cry, *Hasan, Hosein! Hasan, Hosein!* in wailing cadence, can fail to recognise the fatal weapon, sharp and double-edged, which the Omeyyad dynasty allowed thus to fall into the hands of the house of Aly and the house of Abbâs.[1]

The 'Moharram.'

[1] The name of Hasan is added, not only according to the Shîyite theory that he was entitled to the Caliphate (though he resigned it), but because he, too, is regarded as a martyr poisoned by his wife, as they say, at the instigation of Muâvia, but, as we have seen, without any sufficient presumption.

The tragedy is yearly represented on the stage as a religious ceremony, especially by the Shîyites, in the 'Passion Play,' throughout which are interwoven, in a supernatural romance, the lives of the early worthies of Islam, ending with the pathetic tale of the martyr company of Kerbala; while Abu Bekr, Omar, and Othmân are execrated as usurpers, and the whole Omeyyad crew, Obeidallah, Hajjâj, &c., are held up to eternal malediction. A series of these scenes will be found well represented in *The Miracle Play of Hasan and Hosein*, by Sir Lewis Pelly, London, 1879. It will give some idea of the extravagances of Shîya doctrine, and of the intense hold which the episode of Kerbala has taken of the Moslem mind.

CHAPTER L.

THE OMEYYAD AND ABBASSIDE DYNASTIES, AND CONCLUSION.

Omeyyad and Abbasside dynasties.

It remains but very briefly to follow the fortunes of the Omeyyad dynasty; to show how it came to be supplanted by the Abbasside; to trace the history of the more potent tribal and spiritual influences, which sprang up with the Faith; and to explain how some of these, having served their time, have disappeared; while others still survive, as powerful agencies in the rise and fall of nations, and the destinies of Islam.

Yezîd. A.H. 60-64.

Yezîd soon felt the injury accruing to the Caliphate from the revulsion of feeling, in favour of the family of Aly and against the throne, which followed upon the tragedy of Kerbala. Kûfa, with its proverbial inconstancy, was ever ready to espouse the cause of a house the progenitors of which—Aly and his sons—it had cast aside, and as readily again to let drop that cause. Bussorah, on the other hand, was more inclined to the Khârejite heresy. But it was from a very different quarter that the gravest peril first assailed Yezîd and his successors. The danger, as Muâvia had foreshadowed, arose from Abdallah ibn Zobeir. It was he who, to be rid of Hosein, had encouraged that unfortunate prince in his desperate venture. No sooner was the catastrophe of Kerbala announced at Mecca, than Abdallah ibn Zobeir set up a claim in his own person. At first he assumed the pious and modest title, 'Protector of the Holy House.' But he soon went beyond this, and proclaimed himself a rival of the Caliph. Though closely connected with

Ibn Zobeir affects the Caliphate. A.H. 61.

the Prophet's family, it was not to noble birth he trusted. He was a military adventurer, as his father and Talha had been before him, trying conclusions, but more successfully at the first, against the ruling power. Yezîd swore that his adversary should be brought a prisoner, chained by the neck, to Damascus. Shortly after, regretting the oath and yet wishing to fulfil it in the letter, he sent the rebel a silver chain to be thrown as an ornament about his neck, if he would present himself at court. But Ibn Zobeir, scorning the offer, committed the messengers to prison, and soon roused all Arabia against the Caliph. The Governor of Medîna sent a deputation of its chief men to Damascus, hoping that they might be won over by the gifts and kindness of Yezîd. They returned munificently rewarded, but with such an account of the dissipation and disregard of the obligations of Islam prevailing at the court, that the leaders of Medîna were scandalised and forswore allegiance to the godless Caliph. Thereupon an army was sent to chastise the rebellious city. A battle was fought in its neighbourhood, and the vanquished inhabitants were subjected for three days to the licence and rapine of the Syrian troops. But in the end the cause of Ibn Zobeir gained ground both in Arabia and the East. Aided by his brother Musâb, and other able generals, he gained hold at one time of a great portion of the empire. It is not, indeed, impossible that he might have defeated the Omeyyads altogether, if he had consented to make common cause with the Khârejite theocrats. But this he could not do; because these demanded, as a first condition, that the memory of Othmân should be denounced as that of a tyrant justly put to death; whereas, in company with his father, the son of Zobeir had waged war with Aly for the avowed purpose of avenging the blood of Othmân. His arms were, therefore, turned against these heretics; and in everywhere defeating them, he effectually served the cause of the Caliphs of Damascus. For many years he maintained a rival court

Medîna rebels, and is sacked. A.H. 63. A.D. 683.

at Mecca; and his rule is memorable for the rebuilding of the Holy House.[1]

Rebellion of Mukhtâr. A.H. 65–67.

Meanwhile another rebel against the Omeyyads had appeared at Kûfa in the person of Mukhtâr, son of Abu Obeid.[2] This adventurer first dallied with the Khârejites. Afterwards, changing front, he professed himself the agent of the house of Aly, and the lieutenant of Aly's grandson then living at Medîna. As such for a time Mukhtâr ruled at Kûfa, and took summary vengeance on all who had been concerned in the massacre at Kerbala. Shamir and Amr were both executed, and their heads sent to his pretended master. Over Obeidallah, Mukhtâr gained a great victory on the Zab; and the trunkless head of that unfortunate governor, who fell in the battle, was carried to the palace at Kûfa, and cast upon the same spot where just six years before he had gloated over the bloody head of Hosein. Thus early was the tragedy of Kerbala avenged in the death of its chief actors. But the success of Mukhtâr was not long-lived. He was attacked by the generals of Ibn Zobeir, defeated and slain.

Sequel of Ibn Zobeir, and rebuilding the Kâaba. A.H. 63.

By these successful campaigns against the Khârejites and against Mukhtâr, both enemies of the empire, Ibn Zobeir was, in effect, clearing the way for the Court of Damascus to strike a final blow against himself. His brother Musáb was defeated and killed. The famous Hajjâj, at this period the right arm of the Omeyyad Caliphs, was now able to

Musáb killed. A.H. 71.

[1] Weil thinks that if, instead of leaving his battles to be fought by his generals and remaining himself inactive at Mecca, he had shown the energy of his early days and attacked the Caliphs in Syria, he would probably have overthrown them; even as it was, he was near to doing so.

The dismantling of the Kâaba excited the same terror as when it was rebuilt in the youth of Mahomet, nearly a century before. (*Life*, p. 28.) No one durst detach a stone; and when Ibn Zobeir took the pickaxe in his own hands, many fled the city, fearing the Divine wrath, and only returned when after three days they saw no ill effect follow.

In the time of Ibn Zobeir music and singing were common at Mecca, so that notwithstanding the scandal excited at Medîna, the practices of Syria were beginning to leaven even the Holy Cities.

[2] Abu Obeid, the famous warrior who was slain in the battle of the Bridge.

concentrate his forces against the Pretender, who still held his court at Mecca, and with an overpowering army to invest the sacred city. Finding that his game was nearly played out, Ibn Zobeir lost heart, and had thoughts of surrendering. But his aged mother Asma, daughter of Abu Bekr, with the ancient spirit of the Arab matron, exhorted her son to die as a hero should. And so, putting on his armour, he rushed into the unequal combat, and fell. His mother, now a centenarian, is the same who, at the Hegira, seventy-three years before, tore off her girdle to bind the Prophet's wallet to his camel as he took his flight from the cave of Mount Thaur, and thus earned the name of 'the Woman of the shreds.'[1] It is almost the last personal link we have connecting the Prophet's life with the Omeyyad Caliphate. What a world of events had transpired within the lifetime of this lady!

Hajjâj besieges Mecca. Ibn Zobeir slain. A.H. 73.

On the death of Ibn Zobeir, who had thus bravely held his ground as the rival of several successive Caliphs for thirteen years, the Omeyyad rule was anew recognised, without dispute, over the whole Moslem realm, and the name of the reigning Caliph was recited in the public prayers of every Mosque from the East to the farthest West.

Omeyyad dynasty again supreme. A.H. 73.

During the troublous times of which mention has been made, several successions had taken place in the Caliphate. After a short and anxious reign, Yezîd died, leaving the kingdom to a weak son, who survived but a few months. Amidst the disturbances which followed, Merwân made his way to the throne, and, dying in the following year, left the empire to his son Abd al Malik. This prince wielded the sceptre for one-and-twenty years. The greater part of his reign was a struggle with foes such as Ibn Zobeir, Mukhtâr, and other leaders of the Alyite faction, besides the chronic outbursts of Khârejite fanaticism. At one time the Caliph was so beset by these opponents, that for three years he submitted to the humiliation of paying tribute to the Byzantine Court.

Death of Yezîd. A.H. 64.

Merwân, A.H. 65.

Abd al Malik. A.H. 65–86.

[1] *Life of Mahomet*, p. 145.

In the end he triumphed over all his enemies, and transmitted a magnificent and still expanding kingdom to his son Welîd.[1] Notwithstanding the storms that so long surrounded his throne, Abd al Malik cultivated letters, and was mild and beneficent in his sway. During the reign of his son, which lasted ten years, the glory culminated of the Omeyyad race. Elements of disorder still remained, but under the wise and firm sceptre of Welîd they were held in check. The arts of peace prevailed; schools were founded, learning cultivated, and poets royally rewarded; public works of every useful kind were promoted, and even hospitals established for the aged, lame, and blind. Such, indeed, at this era, was the glory of the Court of Damascus, that Weil, of all the Caliphs both before and after, gives the precedence to Welîd. It is the fashion for the Arabian historians to abuse the Omeyyads as a dissolute, intemperate, and godless race; but we must not forget that these all wrote more or less under Abbasside inspiration. And Welîd especially suffers at their hands; for it was under him that Hajjâj[2] made the assault upon the Holy City—a 'sacrilege' which still rankles in the Believer's soul; and, moreover, during whose twenty years' splendid viceroyalty in the East, Kûfa and Bussorah were both bathed in blood; and hence some part of the hatred against the tyrant has come to be reflected upon the name of his Master also. It

Welîd A.H. 86–96.

[1] In this reign the Moslem arms, conducted by the famous Mûsa, reached to the Atlantic. The Moslem fleets were now powerful, and made a descent on Sicily, A.H. 82.

Kûfa and Bussorah continued to give such constant annoyance, that Wâsit (or the '*Midway* garrison') was founded halfway between the two cities, to keep them in check. Moslem mints were now first established, the coinage having a verse of the Corân for the legend. See Weil's *Caliphs*, vol. i. p. 470.

[2] Whatever the cruelties of Hajjâj, it must be confessed that he had a rebellious race to deal with. And in respect of his attack on Mecca, from whence Ibn Zobeir so long defied the empire, it is difficult to see how that attack could have been avoided; but the necessity is forgotten, and only the sacrilege, with its testudos and battering rams, remembered. In point of cruelty, indeed, it would not be easy for inhumanity to outdo the deeds of some of the Abbasside Caliphs. But Hajjâj was the servant of the 'godless' Omeyyads, and indiscriminate abuse must be heaped both on him and his Master.

is too true, indeed, that at Damascus, as in other great cities of the empire, there was now rapidly supervening a shameless laxity of manners; but neither in the Caliphs themselves, nor in their surroundings, did the looseness of morality at the Syrian Court surpass that which, under the Abbassides, not long after prevailed within the royal precincts of Baghdad.[1]

Omeyyad Caliphs. A.H. 96–132.

After Welîd, the Omeyyad dynasty lasted six-and-thirty years. But it began to rest on a precarious basis. For now the agents of the house of Hâshim, descendants of the Prophet and of his uncle Abbâs, commenced to ply secretly, but with vigour and persistency, their task of canvass and intrigue in distant cities, and especially in the provinces of the East.

The Shîya faction canvass for Alyite pretenders.

For a long time, the endeavour of these agitators was directed to the advocacy of the *Shîya* right; that is to say, it was based upon the Divine claim of Aly, and his descendants in the Prophet's line, to the Imâmate or leadership over the empire of Islam.[2] Risings everywhere from time to time took place in favour of some one or other in whose veins flowed the blood of Aly. Everywhere the attempts were suppressed, the pretenders slain or cast into prison, and their armies defeated in the field. But a new and more fatal danger soon arose. The discomfiture of the Shîyas paved the way for the designing advocates of the other Hâshimite branch, namely, that of the house of Abbâs, the uncle of the Prophet. These had all along been plotting in the background, and watching their opportunity. They now vaunted the claims of this line, and were

Canvass in favour of house of Abbâs.

[1] For the unbridled sensuality of the times, the use of wine and other breaches of the Moslem law, and the demoralisation that festered in these seats of luxury, I must again refer to H. von Kremer's excellent work, *Culturgeschichte des Orients unter den Chalifen*, Wien, 1875.

[2] The term *Shîya* (Sheea) means simply sect or party; but it has come to signify the partisans of the house of Aly, holding this Divine claim. Imâm means head or leader, and, according to the Shîyas, the Imâmate, or Headship of all Islam, vests in the house of Aly. Hence we are continually hearing of an Imâm, or successor of this line, as about to appear.

barefaced enough to urge that, being descended from the uncle of Mahomet through *male* representatives, they took precedence over the direct descendants of the Prophet himself, because these came through Fâtima in the *female* line. About the year 130 of the Hegira, Abul Abbâs, of Abbasside descent, was put forward in Persia, as the candidate of this party, and his claim was supported by the famous general Abu Muslim. Successful in the East, Abu Muslim turned his arms to the West. A great battle, one of those which decide the fate of empires, was fought on the banks of the Zab; and, through the defection of certain Khârejite and Yemen levies, was lost by the Omeyyad army. Merwân II., the last of his dynasty, was driven to Egypt, and there killed in the church of Bussir, whither he had fled for refuge. At the close of the year 132,[1] the black flag, emblem of the Abbassides, floated over the battlements of Damascus. The Omeyyad dynasty, after ruling the vast Moslem empire for a century, now disappeared in cruelty and bloodshed. Alyite, Omeyyad, and Khârejite, were equally the victims of the exterminating sword of the first Abbasside Caliph, who thereby earned for himself the unenviable name of *Al Saffâh*, 'The Bloody.'[2]

Abul Abbâs supported by Abu Muslim in Persia. A.H. 130.

Battle of the Zab. A.H. 132. A.D. 750.

Abul Abbâs succeeds to the Caliphate.

So perished the royal house of the Omeyyads. But one escaped. He fled to Spain, which had never favoured the overweening pretensions of the Prophet's family, whether in the line of Aly or Abbâs. Accepted by the Arab tribes, whose influence in the West was paramount, Abd al Rahmân now laid the foundation of a new Dynasty, and perpetuated the Omeyyad name at the magnificent court of Cordova. Some years previously, the flood of Moslem victory sweeping northwards had been stemmed and rolled back by Charles

Omeyyad dynasty in Spain. A.H. 138. A.D. 756.

Moslem defeat at Tours. A.D. 732.

[1] 26th Dzul Hijj, A.H. 132, August 5, A.D. 750.

[2] He was the fifth in descent from the Prophet's uncle; that is, he was the grandson of Aly, who was the grandson of Abbâs. *Al Saffâh* signifies, 'The Butcher.'

Martel at Tours; but a grand career yet remained within the peninsula of Spain to illustrate this remnant of the Omeyyad race.

Other Moslem kingdoms.

Thus with the rise of the Abbassides, the unity of the Caliphate came to an end. Never after, either in theory or in fact, was there a successor to the Prophet, acknowledged as such over all Islam. Other provinces followed in the wake of Spain. The Aghlabite dynasty in the east of Africa and west of it, the Edrisites in Fez, both of Alyite descent; Egypt and Sicily under independent rulers; the Tâhirite kings in Persia, their native soil; these and others, breaking away from the central government, established kingdoms of their own. The name of Caliph, however it might survive in the Abbasside lineage, or be assumed by less legitimate pretenders, had now altogether lost its virtue and significance.

The Caliphate in its original significance comes to an end.

The Abbassides transfer seat of government to Baghdad. A.H. 145.

Yet a splendid empire remained for the Abbassides. They carried their court from Damascus, where the memory of the late dynasty inconveniently survived its fall, to the banks of the Euphrates. There, Kûfa, too prone to be inflamed by Alyite intrigue against the new line of Caliphs, was finally abandoned as the seat of royalty. Another capital was founded by Abu Jáfar, the second of the Abbassides, at Baghdad, fifteen miles above Medâin, on the western bank of the Tigris. For many years, Alyites, Omeyyads, and Khârejites continued to be punished with equal rigour by the new dynasty, and much insecurity and bloodshed prevailed. But misrule and rebellion in the end gave place to rest and peace, and a century followed of unparalleled grandeur and prosperity. Baghdad, answering to its proud name of *Dâr al Salâm*, 'The City of Peace,' became for a time the capital of the world, the centre of luxury, the emporium of commerce, and the seat of learning.

Splendour of Baghdad, the *City of Peace.*

Al Mâmûn. A.H. 198–218.

At the close of the second century of the Hegira, Al Mâmûn succeeded to the throne. His mother was a Persian lady; and he had imbibed from her, and the society in which he was reared at Merve, the principles of the

Motázilites. This strange system, which had recently sprung up in the East, was grafted by the sectarians of Aly (Shîyites) on the transcendental philosophy of the Persians. It was, in fact, a new and altogether unlooked-for development, or rather perversion, of Islam. Heretofore, the sole ground of faith had been the Corân, and the *Sunnat* or deliverances preserved by tradition from the lips of Mahomet. Now, under the Divine Imâmate, or spiritual leadership vested in some member of the house of Aly, there might be other infallible sources of guidance from above. There arose, in fact, a new school of interpretation, one might almost say, a new dispensation. The Corân was treated allegorically; and such difficulties as beset the Orthodox, offended reason, or cramped the growth of society, were thus easily evaded.[1] In the system so evolved, the Prophet, had he revisited the earth, would hardly have recognised his own religion. This elastic development of the Faith, sublimated by the mysticism of Persia, and refined by the subtleties of Indian philosophy, was eagerly embraced by the natives of the Eastern provinces. And Al Mâmûn, who on his accession remained still for a time at Merve, fell deeply under its influence. So inclined was he to the house of Aly, that he gave a daughter of his own in marriage to one of that lineage, and he even adopted their green ensign;—hoping thus to unite the lines of Aly and Abbâs in one new dynasty. Although, on transferring his court to Baghdad, he abandoned the design,[2] Mâmûn still remained faithful to the rationalistic creed. He surrounded himself at the capital with the learned of all persuasions; and in company with them was used to hold discussions, at which such grave questions as those affecting man's relations

Motázilite creed.

Embraced by Al Mâmûn.

[1] Thus the use of wine, and the Mutáah or temporary marriage, could be justified. The latter, by which a conjugal contract can be entered into for a limited period, is still a tenet of the Shîyas; but is justly reprobated by the orthodox.

[2] When he found that the scheme must be given up, he caused his son-in-law—now an inconvenient appendage—to be removed by poison.

with the Deity, and the nature of the Godhead itself, were freely handled. In opposition to the Orthodox, he believed in the doctrine of Free-will. From the received teaching that the Corân is uncreated and eternal, he recoiled, as at variance with the unity of the Godhead; and, in the end, he proclaimed, with pains and penalties for dissent, that it was created. Thus, though a Free-thinker himself, Al Mâmûn, as often happens, denied the free right of judgment to others; and he persecuted cruelly, and on one or two occasions even to the death, those who ventured to differ with him. Still freedom of opinion and open discussion were, beyond comparison, more tolerated under the régime of the Motázilites than of the Orthodox.[1] For forty or fifty years, the tenets of the Rationalists prevailed under the Motázilite Caliphs at Baghdad. Then, there was a reaction back again to the 'Orthodox' faith; and now, all who questioned the eternity of the Corân, who ventured to magnify the claims of Aly, or to detract from those of his predecessors in the Caliphate—Abu Bekr, Omar, Othmân—became in their turn the objects of unrelenting persecution. In one important respect, however, the Motázilite Caliphs (and we might say the Shîya sect in general) have excelled the Orthodox; they are especially distinguished by greater forbearance towards the professors of other creeds. With the return of orthodoxy the reign of intolerance revived; and against both Jews and Christians, the so-called 'Ordinances of Omar' were enforced by an Orthodox court with new and degrading penalties.[2]

Comparative freedom and toleration under Motázilites.

The reigns of Al Mâmûn and his immediate successors were the palmy days of Moslem learning. At the court of Baghdad there were munificently entertained, philosophers, physicians, and men of letters. Amongst them were many

Golden Age of literature at Baghdad.

[1] For example, it was only under a Motázilite court that any such discussion as the Christian 'Apology of Al Kindy' could have been allowed to see the light.

[2] For the 'Ordinances of Omar,' see above, p. 212.

Jews and Christians, versed at once in the Arabic tongue, and in the language and literature of Greece. The monasteries of Syria, Asia Minor, and the Levant, were ransacked for manuscripts of the Greek philosophers, historians, and geometricians. These, with vast labour and erudition, were translated into the Arabic; and thus the learning of the West was made accessible to the Moslem world. Nor were their efforts confined to the reproduction of ancient works, but in some directions extended also to original research. An observatory, reared on the plain of Tadmor, furnished materials for the successful study of astronomy and geometry. In other walks of literature, we have books of travel and history, and, above all, of medicine; while much attention was paid to the less practical, but more popular, branches of astrology and alchemy. It was through the labours of these learned men that the nations of Europe, then shrouded in the darkness of the Middle Ages, became again acquainted with their own proper, but unused and forgotten, patrimony of Grecian science and philosophy.

Introduction of mercenaries and fall of the Caliphate.

But the Golden Age soon faded away. Provinces rebelled. Lieutenants assumed independence. Faction and tumult became the chronic state of the capital, and riotous attack was ever threatening the helpless Caliphs at their very door. The reason is not far to search for. A change had come over the military forces of the empire. From the very first, the Abbasside Caliphs had regarded the Arab tribes, the real backbone of the Caliphate, with a jealous and distrustful eye; and these, cast at last aside, and the stipendiary support of the Dewân withdrawn, were now rapidly returning to nomad life, or mingling with the settled population. Instead of trusting them, or playing off one tribe against another, as the Omeyyads did, the Caliphs of Baghdad, in an evil hour, introduced Turkish mercenaries from Central Asia; and, by-and-by, they committed the protection of their own persons to a body-guard of these. The servant soon

came to be the master. The staff pierced the hand that leaned upon it. The Caliphate became the sport and plaything of the Turkish soldiery, and sank in impotency and contempt.

Politico-religious influences still surviving.

Islam had now run its course of growth and change. After this, we see no new phase of development, spiritual, social, or political. The considerations and incentives peculiar to the Moslem faith, and those connected with the native tribes and families in which it took its birth, became for the most part faint and feeble with the lapse of time, or merged into the common motives which influence mankind. The Mahometan world, as it advanced in years, we find guided more and more by ordinary mundane causes. Nations rise and fall, as elsewhere they rise and fall. Rebellion and vicissitude alternate with prosperity and peace. Yet some of the principles and causes of action which I have sought to trace, though in later times less prominent, have never altogether ceased to operate. Of the four great powers which influenced the fortunes of the Moslem world during the first two centuries, only one, the Alyite, remains unimpaired. The *Arab tribes* ceased in the third century to be a distinct military force, the arbiter of Moslem dynasties, as well as the means by which the Faith was spread. Gorged with the prey of the world, they had already lost their early fire, when the fence set up by Omar between them and the conquered races having been broken down, the grand military organisation was swept away, and their place taken by mercenary levies. Henceforth we meet them no more as an independent force in the body politic. The *Coreish*, with the collapse of the Caliphate, have passed out of sight, excepting as a race of noble memories. The Abbassides are known no longer. But *Alyite* influence, unaffected by the lapse of time, is at some points stronger now even than it ever was. And although the Arabs, as a military institution, have long ago disappeared, we still trace their influence in the *Khârejite*, that is to say the spiritual and theocratic aspect of their creed.

Tendency of revivals among Orthodox and Shîyas.

The countries in which the native Arabs mostly spread and settled, and where, consequently, the Arab spirit longest survived (by far the largest part of the Mahometan world), are still, on the whole, the most devoted to the Orthodox faith; while Persia and a few smaller principalities continue loyal to the Shîya creed. Revivals follow a corresponding course. Amongst the Orthodox, the quickened spiritual sense even in the present day shows itself in an implicit return to the letter of the Corân; in a Puritan protest against all forms and superstitions inconsistent with the sacred text; in outbursts of zeal for 'fighting in the ways of the Lord,' and generally in a tendency towards the ancient tenets of Khârejite theocracy.[1] Among the Shîyas, on the other hand, the spirit of revival breaks out in wild and mystical devotion, in the excesses of Soofeeism, and in the profane extravagances engendered by a belief in the Divine Imâmate and emanations of the Deity.

Turkey, Persia, and India.

Persia remains still the only important kingdom given up to the Shîya faith. In India, the emperors, being of Turkish blood, were generally orthodox in their profession. They encouraged the immigration, by grants of land and other privileges, of vast crowds of Arab followers drawn directly from their native soil. And so throughout Hindostan, the Soonnie has always overshadowed the Shîya faith. At the same time, Islam in India (as in Persia and other Shîya lands) has been, from the failure to convert the millions of its heathen subjects, less intolerant of idol temples and alien worship, than elsewhere. While, on the other hand, in India, as in all Soonnie countries, revivals of the Faith have run in the lines of puritanical reform, rather than, as in Persia, into mystical excess.[2]

Enmity between Soonnies and Shîyas.

Between Turkey and Persia, there is a broad distinction

[1] Such is the character of the Wahâbee revival which, born in the present century, spread rapidly and widely over Arabia, and extended in some of its features (chiefly of a protesting character) even to India.

[2] Soonnies (Sunnies) are those who acknowledge the authority of the *Sunnat*, or precedent established by the practice of Mahomet, and also admit the validity of the Caliphates of Abu Bekr, Omar, and Othmân, which the Shîyites deny.

as to tolerance. The Osmanlies, notwithstanding their close territorial contact with Christianity, are, in virtue of their orthodoxy, intolerant of the least divergence from the Faith; while the more distant Persia (following the example of the Motázilite Caliphs) is less impatient of other creeds, and more amenable to outer influence.[1] In other respects, too, the ancient sentiment dividing the Soonnie and the Shîya is as bitter now as in the days when Aly cursed Muâvia, and Muâvia cursed Aly, in the daily public service. The hopeless schism has tended to slacken the progress of Islam, and abate its aggressive force. Thus recently, when a deadly blow was aimed at the head of the Moslem Empire on this side of the Bosphorus, the sectarians of Persia, through hate and jealousy of the Soonnie creed, declined to rally round the banner of the Crescent; and, indeed, so far as any help or even sympathy from Shîyas went, Islam might have been blotted out of Europe altogether. The Soonnie scorns the Shîya; and the Shîya, in his turn, spits on the graves of those great Caliphs, Omar and Abu Bekr, to whom they owe it that Islam spread thus marvellously, nay even that it survived its birth.

Political and economical outlook of Islam.

The Islam of to-day is substantially the same as the Islam which we quitted at the close of this history. By the middle of the third century it had completed its circuit, and had rung all the changes which seem to lie within the range of its potentiality. Swathed in the rigid bands of the Corân, Islam is powerless, like the Christian dispensation, to adapt itself to the varying circumstances of time and place, and to keep pace with, if not to lead and direct, the progress of society and elevation of the race. In the body politic, the spiritual and the secular are hopelessly confounded; and we

[1] Their bigotry is conspicuous mostly in matters of purification, a remnant, probably, of their ancient faith. Baths and mosques are held polluted by the presence of an infidel. It is curious, also, that the Persians to this day curse the memory of Al Mâmûn, and accuse him of poisoning his Alyite son-in-law; curiously enough, using his name as a term of abuse.

fail of perceiving any approach to free institutions, or any germ whatever of popular government. The nearest approach to it was in the brotherhood of Islam; but that, as a controlling power, was confined strictly to the Arab races, and with their fall it has entirely disappeared. The type and exemplar of Moslem rule is the absolute and autocratic monarch, alternating at times with the will of lawless soldiery; and the only check on the despot's power is the law of the Corân, as expounded by the learned, and enforced by the sentiment of the nation.

Obnoxious social ordinances.

Polygamy.

Nor has there been anywhere change or advance perceptible in the state of society. Polygamy and servile concubinage are still the privilege, or the curse, of Islam; the worm at its root, the secret of its fall. By these the unity of the household is fatally broken, and the purity and virtue weakened of the family tie: the vigour of the dominant classes is sapped; the body politic becomes weak and languid, excepting for intrigue; and the throne itself liable to fall a prey to doubtful or contested succession. As to slavery, and more especially female slavery, we look too exclusively at its effect on the wretched subject of the institution. Its influence on the owner is infinitely more disastrous. However much the condition of slavery may be ameliorated by the kindly influences which, in Moslem lands, surround it as a domestic institution, still, servile concubinage fixes its withering grasp with more damaging effect even upon the master, than on the miserable slave of his enjoyments.

Female slavery.

Divorce.

Hardly less injurious is the power of divorce, which can be exercised, without the assignment of any reason whatever, at the mere word and will of the husband. It not only hangs over each individual household like the sword of Damocles, but affects the tone of society at large; for even if not put in force, it cannot fail, as a potential influence existing everywhere, to weaken the marriage bond, and detract from the dignity and self-respect of the sex at large.

The Veil, and seclusion of women.

Nor is it otherwise with 'the Veil,' and those other domestic restrictions enjoined by the Corân, which banish woman from her legitimate place in society. The loss, indeed, is not so much hers as of the other sex, who are altogether shut out, in public and social life, from the bright and gracious, purifying and softening influences, of female companionship. The interdict against games of chance, and the prohibition of even the moderate use of wine (ordinances in themselves not altogether devoid of merit), have tended to aggravate the moroseness, gloom, and gracelessness of Moslem life in public, resulting from the banishment of the female sex.

Wine and games of chance forbidden.

Islam stationary.

These and the other institutions of Islam form an integral part of its teaching. They are bound up in the Corân, the charter of its existence. A reformed Islam, which should part with the Divine ordinances on which they rest, or attempt in the smallest degree to change them by a rationalistic selection, abatement, or variation, would be Islam no longer. That they tend to keep the professors of the Moslem faith in a backward, and in some respects a barbarous state, cannot be doubted. It is still true that, as at Damascus, Baghdad, and Cordova, an era of great magnificence has at times prevailed. Commerce and speculation (notwithstanding the ban placed by the Corân on the receipt of interest) prospered; the arts of peace were cultivated; travel and intercourse promoted liberality of national sentiment: learning and literature advanced apace. But it was all short-lived, because superficial. Civilisation did not penetrate the family. It failed to leaven domestic life. The canker-worm of polygamy, divorce, servile concubinage and the veil, lay at the root. And society, withering under the influence of these, soon relapsed into barbarism again.

The Caliphate a thing of the past.

To speak of the Caliphate as existing, or likely ever again to exist, in modern times, is but a dream of the past, a fond anachronism. The conditions which rendered the

Caliphate possible, have been exhausted long centuries ago, and are beyond the possibility of resuscitation.

Islam may prosper apart from political ascendency.

The political ascendency of Islam is doomed. Every year witnesses a sensible degree of subsidence. In the close connection of the Moslem faith with the civil power, this cannot but in some measure affect the prestige of Islam itself. Nevertheless, the religion may long retain its hold upon the people, unimpaired by the decline of its sway in the State.

Conclusion

As regards the spiritual, social, and dogmatic aspect of Islam, there has been neither progress nor material change since the third century of the Hegira. Such as we found it to have been then, such is it also at the present day. The nations may advance in civilisation and morality, in philosophy, science, and the arts; but Islam stands still. And thus stationary, so far as the lessons of this history avail, it will remain.

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